



National Institutes of Health  
National Institute of Mental Health  
6001 Executive Boulevard  
Bethesda, Maryland 20892

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Pathways to Prevention Workshop:  
*Advancing Research to Prevent Youth Suicide.*

It is a pleasure for the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) to co-sponsor this workshop with the NIH Office of Disease Prevention (ODP), the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) and the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health (NCCIH).

Suicide is the 10<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death in the United States; over 41,000 Americans die by suicide each year. As the second leading cause of death for youth ages 10-34, suicide profoundly affects our nation's youth. The effects of suicide are wide reaching, and may impact families, friends and entire communities. As a result improving our capacity to decrease the suicide rate is of significant public health importance.

Suicide can be prevented. Research has already elucidated multiple risk factors for suicide, including having a mental illness, such as depression, or a substance abuse disorder, prior suicide attempts, family history of suicide, family violence, exposure to suicidal behavior in others, and incarceration. While we are improving our ability to identify who is at increased risk for suicide, there are many research gaps to fill in order to decrease suicide and suicidal behaviors. For example, there is little evidence on how early suicide prevention programs can best help at-risk youth, and few studies have tested whether interventions that reduce risk factors such as exposure to abusive parenting result in fewer suicide attempts. The goal of this workshop is to discuss strategies and approaches for integrating existing data sets and systems and developing and/or adapting statistical methods to analyze data in order to address the complex challenge presented by suicide being a relatively low occurrence event.

I appreciate the efforts made thus far by the participants of the NIH Pathways to Prevention Organizational Meeting and Workshop Planning Content Area Expert Meeting. I also thank the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, Evidence-based Practice Center for conducting the systematic review which provides important background information for the discussions

Thank you for your interest in advancing suicide prevention research and for your participation in this workshop. We look forward to continuing the collaboration through research, training, and education in order to reduce the rate of suicide in the United States.

Sincerely,

Bruce Cuthbert, PhD  
Acting Director, National Institute of Mental Health  
National Institutes of Health