



## Panhandle Health District

*Healthy People in Healthy Communities*

**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

**Panhandle Health District**

Media Contact:  
Katherine Hoyer  
208-415-5108

### NEWS RELEASE

## SPAN of North Idaho Provides Funds to Assist in Suicide Prevention Among Veterans

Panhandle Health District – January 25, 2023



Hank Thornton (front row second from left) accepts funds from Don Duffy while surrounded by local veterans

As a part of their suicide prevention efforts, Panhandle Health District's (PHD) Suicide Prevention Action Network of north Idaho (SPAN) provided the Veterans Outreach Center, Inc. \$10,000 to continue their efforts to prevent suicide among veterans in Benewah

county. The funds were generated from SPAN's annual fundraising walk focused on remembering those lost to suicide and to raise awareness.

In 2020, suicide ranked the 9<sup>th</sup> most common cause of death in Idaho and claimed the lives of 421 Idahoans. According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 57 Idaho veterans died by suicide in 2020.

Hank Thornton, a 73-year-old Vietnam veteran, is the founder of Veterans Outreach Center, Inc. Thornton began his work in Benewah county in 2018. He started by knocking on doors of veterans he thought might be at risk for suicide and connects them with resources. Now the foundation has grown and has a team to assist in knocking on doors, making phone calls, and helping those facing their darkest hour.

PHD's SPAN of North Idaho has chapters based in Kootenai and Benewah counties and an affiliate group based in Bonner county. While suicide and non-fatal suicidal behavior are major public health problems across Idaho, they can be preventable. SPAN is dedicated to suicide prevention through work hosting trainings and events, providing gun locks and resources, working towards zero suicide initiatives with the state.

The resources below can help our community understand and become involved in efforts to prevent suicide, as suicide impacts everyone.

## Resources

**Suicide Prevention Lifeline Text or Call Line: 988**

**988 Chat** [988lifeline.org/](https://988lifeline.org/)

**Kootenai Behavioral Health: [800-200-1511](tel:800-200-1511)**

**North Idaho Crisis Service: [208-946-5595](tel:208-946-5595)**, phone Line for Bonner and Boundary counties. Eight licensed mental health professionals are available 8am – 5pm, Monday – Friday; Saturday/Sunday 24hrs.

**[Ambitions of Idaho](#): Behavioral Health & Developmental Disability Services**

**[Idaho Suicide Prevention Hotline](#)**

**[Region 1 Behavioral Health Board](#)**

**[North Idaho Crisis Center](#)**

**[St. Vincent de Paul](#)**

**[Idaho Department of Health & Welfare's Children's Mental Health Program](#)**

**[Idaho Lives Project](#)**

988 Lifeline Twitter: [twitter.com/988Lifeline](https://twitter.com/988Lifeline)

988 Lifeline Facebook: [www.facebook.com/988lifeline/](https://www.facebook.com/988lifeline/)

988 Lifeline Instagram: [www.instagram.com/988lifeline/](https://www.instagram.com/988lifeline/)

988 chat [988lifeline.org/](https://988lifeline.org/)

# # #

---

**Panhandle Health District** provides over 40 different public health programs to families, individuals and organizations in northern Idaho. From food and drinking water safety to health education and disease control, public health services are critical to ensure our community is a safe and healthy place to live, work and play.

The PHD team is made up of nurses, nutritionists, environmental health specialists, health educators and many other dedicated professionals with a common goal to deliver vital public health services.

Panhandle Health District is one of seven health districts in the state of Idaho.