



PHD Media
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NEWS RELEASE

Annual Suicide Prevention & Awareness Walk Panhandle Health District – September 10, 2024

Panhandle Health District's Suicide Prevention Action Network of North Idaho (SPAN) will host their annual suicide prevention and awareness 5k event Saturday, September 14th in Riverstone Park. The event is in remembrance of those lost to suicide, supports those touched by suicide, reduces the stigma associated with mental health and connects community members with much needed local resources.

"The event is a way for people to connect with each other and actively participate in our suicide prevention efforts," said Valerie Phillips, Suicide Prevention & Youth Education Specialist at Panhandle Health District. "Come 'Walk About It' with us! We guarantee you'll enjoy the supportive and inclusive environment you'll find at the event."

In 2023, there were 458 Suicide deaths among Idahoans; the rate was 23.3 deaths per 100,000 population and Suicide was ranked the 7th highest cause of death in Idaho. Of those 458 suicide deaths, thirty-four were minors under the age of eighteen. SPAN of North Idaho is trying to change those statistics by educating and advocating for the community.

Local organizations, with focuses on mental health support, will be in attendance and participants will have an opportunity to visit with them throughout the morning. Attendees will also enjoy music, refreshments, sno-cones and opportunities to honor loved ones.

"We are spreading hope and understanding, breaking down the stigmas that often surround mental health," said Phillips.

Suicide is a major challenge to public health. It contributes to premature death, morbidity, lost productivity and health care costs. Suicide causes are complex and determined by multiple factors. The goal of suicide prevention is to reduce factors that increase risk and strengthen support factors. Everyone has a role in preventing suicide.

Register online: www.spannorthidaho.com

Registration the day of the event is available beginning at 8:30am.

Registration is free. Commemorative event shirts, socks, and dedication signs are available for purchase.

The 2024 SPAN 5k title sponsor is Hemisphere Health.

Learn how to recognize potential suicide risk in individuals, how to speak to them effectively, and how to get them to help here: healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/services-programs/behavioral-health/warning-signs-and-how-help

Need Support Now? If you or someone you know is struggling or in crisis, help is available. Call or text **988** or chat **988lifeline.org**.

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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.