

ALLIANCE NEWS



Alliance for Better Communities

SPECIAL EDITION

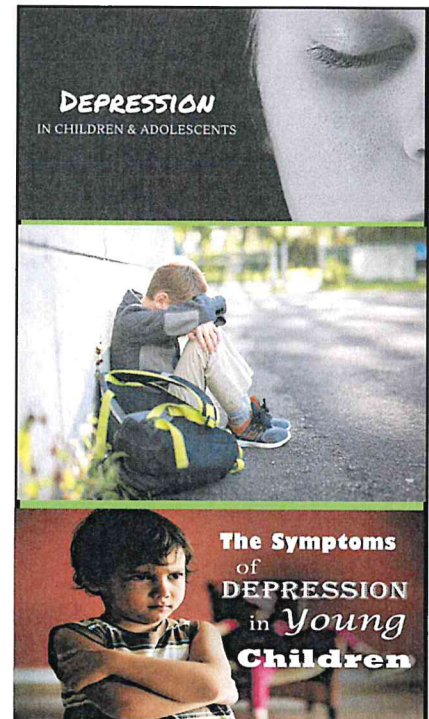
THE INCREASING EPIDEMIC OF CHILD AND ADOLESCENT SUICIDE

MARCH 2021

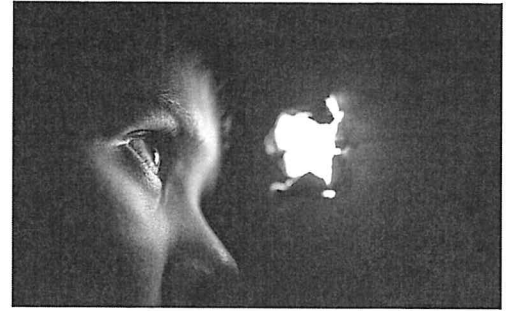
By Martin J. Rothschild, J.D.

The Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated a disturbing trend which started before the disease took hold; increasing suicide attempts and deaths among children and adolescents. The 2nd leading cause of death among children and adolescents ages 10-24 in the United States is suicide. It is the 3rd leading cause of death among 12-year-olds. Studies have shown that nearly one of every eight children between the ages of 6 and 12 has suicidal thoughts. Males commit suicide at a rate almost 4 times higher than females, but females attempt suicide 3 times more often than males. Suicide has a tragic effect on family, friends, and all those who are left behind.¹

Suicide attempts are often impulsive among younger children. Feelings of sadness, confusion, anger, or problems with attention and hyperactivity are frequent triggers. Suicide attempts among teenagers tend to be associated with feelings of stress, self-doubt, pressure to succeed, financial uncertainty, disappointment, and loss. Suicide can be seen as a last ditch solution to their problems. In addition to depression, other recognized risk factors for suicide include: family history of suicide attempts, exposure to violence, impulsivity, aggressive or disruptive behavior, access to firearms, bullying, feelings of hopelessness or helplessness, acute loss or rejection. When thinking about suicide, children and adolescents sometimes make overt suicidal statements or comments such as, "I wish I was dead," or "I won't be a problem for you much longer." Warning signs to look for include: changes in eating or sleeping habits, frequent or pervasive sadness, withdrawal from friends, family, and regular activities, frequent complaints about physical symptoms often related to



emotions, such as stomachaches, headaches, fatigue, etc. decline in the quality of schoolwork, and preoccupation with death and dying.²



Syracuse.com recently released a study showing how the pandemic has adversely affected the mental health of school children in the upstate N.Y. area. For children already suffering from mental illness, symptoms have worsened due to the lack of socialization forced by shutdowns and the end of school activities. Significantly, even those who were not previously suffering from issues are now wrestling with depression and anxiety at rates not seen before. School kids are missing class, friends, sports and band, but they are just as tragically missing the everyday human interactions which we take for granted. These include the smiles of encouragement from teachers, the discussions among friends about life issues, and affirmation from others that things are O.K. It's often the small interactions with people and their subtle reactions which shape children's, and adult's for that matter, sense of well being.³

In 2020, suicidal ideation and actual suicides increased among 11- to 21-year-olds in a major metropolitan area of Texas when compared to 2019. The suicide related behaviors increased when stressors related to Covid-19 and stay-at-home orders and school closures were in effect. This indicated that young people experienced elevated levels of stress during these periods according to a study published in the journal *Pediatrics*. Electronic health record data from 18,247 youths presenting for any complaint to a large pediatric emergency department was collected. 12,827 youths completed a suicide risk screening; 59% were female and the mean age was 14.5 years. About 48% were Hispanic/Latinx, 26.8% non-Hispanic White and 19.1% non-Hispanic Black or African American. Suicidal thoughts or behaviors were reported by 3.5% of patients. Suicidal ideation was up in all groups particularly in March and July 2020 compared to the same time in 2019. Suicide attempts were up in all groups over 2019 in February, March, April and July 2020. Sex, racial and ethnic group identity did not significantly affect the numbers.⁴

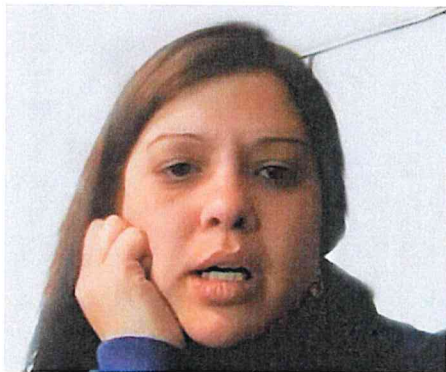
Another area of the country where student suicides have increased as a result of the pandemic is Las Vegas. As a result, the school board voted to bring back most students into the classroom despite rising coronavirus cases. School districts nationwide are now weighing the mental health risks against viral risks in deciding the best way to protect students in these very trying times.⁵



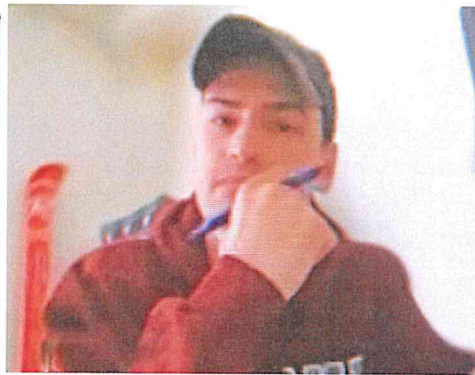
**ZOOM KEEPS THE DREADED VIRUS AT BAY
BUT HUMANS TIRE OF THE DREADED ZOOM**



Mr. Tim Reutten, Director of the Community Services Board, presents an overview of the current crises and their impact on providers.



TRACY LEONARD, Credo Community Ctr



NOLAN PITKIN – Assistant District Attorney



JOSH SHERMAN, Central New York PRC



SHELBY ANDERSON, ACR Health



TINA O'NEIL CONTINUES TO OUTWIT THE VIRUS



Scott Gray, Chairman, Jefferson County Board of Legislators



WANDA HOLTZ, Director, Anchor Recovery Center



ANITA COMMANDS A PROMPT STOP TO DISCUSSION AT THE END OF THE MEETING



MARK WALCYK– New York State Assemblyman

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Legal weed delivered to your door? Cuomo's marijuana plan now includes it. retrieved from: <https://www.syracuse.com/news/2021/02/legal-weed-delivered-to-your-door-cuomos-marijuana-plan-now-includes-it.html>

...Gov. Andrew Cuomo has added the option of home delivery to his latest proposal for legalized, adult-use recreational marijuana in New York. Local governments would have the ability to opt out of allowing delivery within their jurisdictions.

Delivery is one of several amendments Cuomo announced this week to the legal marijuana plan he officially proposed in January. This is the third year Cuomo has endorsed legal recreational marijuana in New York, but the two earlier plans failed to win support in the state Legislature. The state does have a legal medical marijuana program....

Another amendment Cuomo added this week to the new legal marijuana plan would create a \$100 million "social equity fund." It would use marijuana revenues to "help revitalize communities that have been most harmed by the war on drugs," the governor's office said today. It would assist those communities with job placement, housing, nutrition and other services. ...