



State of Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent

Facts about Youth Suicide in Wisconsin

Suicide deaths and common methods¹

- On average, one youth dies by suicide each week (50/year).
- Suicide is the 2nd most common cause of death after car accidents, and significantly more frequent than homicide and all forms of cancer.
- Boys complete suicide 4 times more often than girls.
- Among boys, guns were used in 56% of suicide completions.
- Spring is the most common season for ER visits and hospitalizations for suicide attempts.

Comparing WI & US²

- Suicide is the cause of more than 17% of deaths among youth in WI, vs. 12% in the U.S.
- We have the 13th highest rate of suicide among all states.
- For ages 10-14, our rate is 5th highest in the nation; 20 states had too few suicides among youth age 10-14 to accurately report a rate.
- Wisconsin's youth suicide rate has been higher than the national rate for 23 of the last 25 years (1981-2005). If WI had the same rate as the U.S., we would have had about 350 fewer youth suicides since 1981. There is a slow, downward trend in the rate, but if the trend continues, Wisconsin won't reach the U.S. average until 2076. (Note that WI is part of the U.S. average in these data.)

Suicide Attempts and Related Risk Factors³

- WI youth reported high levels of binge drinking. Binge drinking is highly correlated with suicide attempts.
- 1 in 3 high school girls and 1 in 5 boys reported symptoms of depression.
- 15% of youth reported seriously considering suicide.
- More than 10% of students reported making a plan about how they would attempt suicide.
- About 10% of high school girls and 5% of boys reported making a suicide attempt.
- 3% reported that they required medical attention because of a suicide attempt.

For more information please contact:

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¹ DHS WISH data, 1999-2006, ages 10-19, retrieved 10/30 & 31 2007

² CDC WISQARS data, 1999-2005, ages 10-19, retrieved 03/19/08

³ 2007 Wisconsin Youth Risk Behavior Survey, WI DPI