

The following information is intended to provide a snapshot of key models, programs, and initiatives focused on suicide prevention in Vermont healthcare settings. For questions or suggested edits regarding this document, please contact Chris Allen, Suicide Prevention Director, Department of Mental Health, at christopher.m.allen@vermont.gov.

Key Terms and Models

Zero Suicide: SAFER CARE FOR THOSE AT RISK OF SUICIDE

Zero Suicide is a transformational framework for health and mental health care systems. Inspired by health care systems that saw dramatic reductions in patient suicide, the foundational belief of Zero Suicide is that suicide deaths for individuals under the care of health and behavioral health systems are preventable. For systems dedicated to improving patient safety, Zero Suicide presents an aspirational challenge and practical framework for system-wide transformation toward safer suicide care. As described below, Vermont is implementing a number of initiatives using the Zero Suicide framework to guide improvements in healthcare and reduce suicide deaths and attempts in Vermont. Click on the link for more info, <https://zerosuicide.edc.org/>

SafeSide

SafeSide is an online learning platform being promoted and offered in Vermont to support suicide prevention in primary care settings. Safeside provides a framework, tools, templates, training, and data to strengthen organizational cultures for safety and prevention; promote best practices, policies, and pathways; and support its ongoing education and development. During the Spring of 2024, Safeside will be offered free-of-charge to primary care practices participating in the *Suicide Safer Care Mini Grant Project* (see below). Click on the link for more info, <https://safesideprevention.com/>

Vermont Suicide Prevention Initiatives

Suicide Safer Care Mini Grant Project

The Blueprint for Health and Departments of Health (VDH) and Mental Health (DMH) are partnering with the Center for Health and Learning to implement improved screening, risk assessment, treatment, safety planning, lethal means safety, and transitions of care in Primary Care Practices (PCP's) for patients who may be experiencing suicidality. The project provides training, networking, and quality improvement tools to participating organizations and supports collaboration between primary care practices and their regional Designated Agency improve referrals and transitions of care for treatment of suicidality. For more information, contact Deana Chase, Center for Health and Learning, at deana@healthandlearning.org.

Vermont Emergency Department Suicide Prevention Quality Improvement Initiative

The Vermont Program for Quality in Health Care (VPQHC), in partnership with the Vermont Department of Health and two private foundations, are working with Vermont hospitals to improve suicide care in emergency departments for individuals experiencing suicidality using the *Zero Suicide* framework. Click on the link for more info, <https://www.vpqhc.org/>

Blueprint Expansion

Vermont is experiencing increased deaths from drug overdose and suicide and concerning levels and acuity of mental health and substance use disorders. In addition, there is a need to broaden screening for and address social determinants of health, such as questions around housing, finances, mental health, and substance use disorders. The objective of this project is to ensure that screening, brief intervention, and navigation to services occurs across the entire population served by Blueprint primary care practices (most primary care practices in the state).

The Blueprint's strategy for expanding the Community Health Teams will increase capacity to provide co-occurring mental health and substance use screening, brief intervention, treatment, and navigation to and coordination of services.

[Community Health Team Expansion Pilot Program | Blueprint for Health \(vermont.gov\)](#)

Facing Suicide VT

The Department of Health (VDH) and Department of Mental Health have developed and launched a state-wide public awareness campaign and website entitled Facing Suicide VT to promote awareness of suicide prevention resources, reduce stigma, encourage help-seeking and help-giving behavior, and give a voice to Vermonters who have been affected by suicide. Click on the link for more info, [FacingSuicideVT.com](https://www.facing-suicidevt.com)

Child Psychiatry Access Program


The Vermont Child Psychiatry Access Program (VTCAP) is a training and consultation program that provides FREE, immediate support and psychiatric consultation to primary care providers (PCPs) who, in turn, provide care to their pediatric patients in need of mental health treatment. Click on the link for more info, <https://www.vtcpap.com/>

Garrett Lee Smith Youth Zero Suicide Academy and Community of Practice

The Department of Health, in collaboration with the Educational Development Center, is offering ongoing training and consultation to teams of staff at youth mental health programs to improve care for youth at risk for suicide using the Zero Suicide framework and treatment guidelines. For more info, contact Elora Taylor at elora.taylor@vermont.gov.

Mission Connect Vermont: Governor's Challenge

Mission Connect is a statewide initiative that includes a broad set of state, community and federal partners working to identify innovative ways to deliver support and care to Service Members, Veterans, and their Families whenever and wherever they need it. Areas of focus include: 1) Identify Service Members, Veterans, and their Families wherever they are, and screen for suicide risk, 2) Promote connectedness and improve care transitions, making it easy to identify and access necessary resources to support our SMVF, 3) Increase lethal means safety and safety planning through a targeted educational approach for health care professionals and access to the needed safety strategies. Click on the link for more info, <https://www.vahhs.org/governors-challenge>



Man Therapy: VDH is partnering with *Grit Digital* to promote the web-based, interactive mental health resource [Man Therapy](#) in Vermont. Man Therapy is designed to increase access to mental health supports for men who may be struggling with thoughts of suicide but are hesitant to seek mental health support. This resource can be promoted in a variety of settings, including primary care practices as a mental health wellness tool for patients at risk for suicide or depression. For more information, contact Nick Nichols @ nick.nichols@vermont.gov.

Promotion of Safe Storage and Lethal Means Safety: VDH and DMH are working to support the promotion of safe storage and lethal means safety across several different settings and programs, including health care partners. For information about how healthcare settings can promote safe storage and lethal means safety, go to: <https://healthandlearning.org/prevention-resources/>

Vermont Programs Supporting Suicide Prevention

For a full list of resources and organizations that support suicide prevention in Vermont, please go to: <https://facing suicidevt.com/resources/>.