

EPI-AID ON YOUTH SUICIDE IN SANTA CLARA COUNTY

2/2/2016

An Overview

Santa Clara County Public Health Department



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What is an “Epi-Aid”?

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- Investigation of an urgent public health problem
- U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) assists state and local public health officials in these investigations
- Goal is to determine causes and extent of the problem, develop prevention and control recommendations
- Public health response, not a research study
 - More flexible
 - Uses existing data sources and epidemiologic methods
 - Focused on identifying ways to reduce risk for suicidal behavior by addressing factors at the individual, family, and community levels

How was this Epi-Aid initiated?

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- From 2009 through 2015, there were a number of suicides among incoming, current, or alumni members in one school district in Palo Alto (Santa Clara County)
- In response, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) issued a formal request to the CDC for assistance, on behalf of the Santa Clara County Public Health Department (SCCPHD)
- The CDC, in partnership with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), will provide this assistance to the CDPH and SCCPHD through conducting an Epi-Aid investigation

Epi-Aid Objectives (Santa Clara County)

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- Characterize the epidemiology and trends in fatal and non-fatal suicidal behaviors, youth ages 10-24 in Santa Clara County (2008-2015)¹
 - Data permitting, compare characteristics at multiple levels, such as school districts and cities
- Examine the degree to which media coverage of youth suicides occurring from 2008 through 2015 in Santa Clara County, California, met safe reporting guidelines for suicides
- Inventory and compare youth suicide prevention policies, activities, and protocols used in the community to evidence-based and national recommendations
- Make recommendations on prevention strategies that can be used at the school, city, and county level

¹Epidemiological investigations usually have the objective of describing patterns and trends related to a disease in a population and examining associations between the disease and various determinants. This Epi-Aid, for example, will describe trends in fatal and non-fatal suicide behavior among youth and identify risk and protective factors.

Components of the Epi-Aid

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- **Short-term assistance**, but can span several months
- **Preparation** (December-January)
 - Planning, developed objectives
 - Data acquisition
 - Engaged with community organizations and agencies
- **Field work** (February 16-29, dates subject to change)
 - Prepare and analyze existing datasets
 - Conduct informal meetings with community organizations about suicide prevention strategies being implemented at the county and local level
- **Follow-up** (timeline TBD)
 - Continued analysis at the CDC/SAMHSA offices
 - Brief preliminary report (shortly after field work)
 - Final report
 - Report dissemination and use

CDC/SAMHSA

- Provide technical assistance and subject matter expertise
- Draft objectives based on SCCPHD/community input
- Analyze existing data and review data sources for relevance
- Conduct media scan and suicide prevention activity/policy review
- Meet with local organizations and agencies
- Draft report and make recommendations

SCCPHD

- Gain access to datasets for CDC/SAMHSA
- Serve as liaison between CDC/SAMHSA and the community
- Host CDC/SAMHSA during field visit
- Review reports
- Work with community on dissemination

Data sources (examples)

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- Use existing quantitative datasets, generally specific to Santa Clara County:
 - Coroner's data
 - Vital statistics (death files)
 - Emergency department and hospitalization data
 - School surveys
 - EMS/911
- Epi-Aids can include existing local data sources:
 - Need to receive by one month after conclusion of field work (end of March)
 - CDC/SAMHSA will review for relevance to the objectives

Activities that will not be part of this Epi-Aid

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- This Epi-Aid will not include new data collection (e.g., new surveys, interviews, or focus groups)
- Epi-Aids use epidemiologic methods; they do not utilize methods like psychological autopsies
- As a result, this Epi-Aid will not provide information or details about individual deaths



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