



Richmond Confidential

County supervisors adopt suicide prevention plan

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The Contra Costa Board of Supervisors has taken steps to curb what it considers an unacceptably high rate of suicides.

More county residents die by suicide than homicide, according to recent statistics, from a special county committee. On Tuesday, the Board of Supervisors adopted the Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan.

It was the work of the county's Suicide Prevention Committee, made up of more than a dozen agencies and groups, including representatives from the RYSE Youth Center, Contra Costa Behavioral Health, Contra Costa Crisis Center and Kaiser Permanente and took two years to complete.

"We are focused on the gatekeepers," said Rhonda James, executive director of the Contra Costa Crisis Center and co-chair of the committee.

"With domestic violence we did a good job of training primary care physicians to look for signs and ask the right questions. We want the same with suicide prevention."

The plan includes increasing collaboration between county systems and community service providers.

"The board adopting this strategy means we can facilitate bringing all of the services together," District 1 Supervisor John Gioia said. "The more cooperation, the more effective outcomes we can achieve."

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Gioia says that this prevention strategy is just as important to Richmond residents as it is to residents in other parts of the county.

Statistics from the Suicide Prevention Committee list Richmond as second in the county for number of deaths by suicide. Concord is first. The research also found that suicide accounts for one third of youth deaths. It also found that 34 percent of suicides in the county involve a gun, and males are almost three times more likely to die by suicide than females.

“The next steps aren’t going to roll out immediately,” Gioia said, “but residents will see increased outreach and more attention paid to those who might be at risk.”

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