



Mental Health Association in Texas

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Mental Health Advocates Release Bilingual Suicide Prevention Publication

AUSTIN, TX (October 3, 2006)—Far too many Hispanic males and females consider taking their lives by suicide each year. Survey data from the Centers for Disease Control indicates that more than half of all suicides among Hispanics occur among those aged 10-34 years with Hispanic males being almost six times as likely to die by suicide as Hispanic females. To address this alarming trend, the Mental Health Association in Texas has released the publication, “**Comprender el Suicidio: Lo Fundamental**” (“**Understanding Suicide: The Basics**”) to help individuals, families and communities learn about suicide prevention and the actions that are critical to saving lives.

“Suicide is a subject surrounded by myths and misunderstanding,” said Lynn Lasky Clark, LMSW, president and CEO of the Mental Health Association in Texas. “Perhaps because suicide is rarely talked about freely and openly, there are a lot of misconceptions about issues such as who is at risk, why, under what circumstances, and how to get help.”

“Data indicates that Hispanic youth are the fastest growing segment of the U.S. population and account for one fourth of Hispanic suicide deaths,” said Merily Keller, co-chair of the Texas Suicide Prevention Council. “The data also indicates that Hispanic youths report having more feelings of sadness or hopelessness and of suicidal ideation and attempt compared to white and black youths,” said Keller.

As additional components of the statewide prevention campaign the Mental Health Association in Texas has released a community suicide prevention toolkit and administers nationally recognized QPR (Question, Persuade and Refer) Gatekeeper training to educate and train individuals and suicide prevention advocates locally, regionally and statewide to recognize the warning signs of suicide and know how to help an individual in crisis.

“This course teaches include the warning signs of suicide, how to take action, the role of depression and mental illness, how to talk about suicide and how to find resources and support,” said Keller. “These are some of the basic intervention steps that may help save a life from suicide.”

To obtain a free electronic copy of the publication, “**Comprender el Suicidio: Lo Fundamental**” (“**Understanding Suicide: The Basics**”) and other mental health materials in Spanish and English, visit the Mental Health Association in Texas online at www.mhatexas.org . If someone you know may be experiencing a mental health crisis, please call 1-800-273-TALK (8255) for help.

The Mental Health Association in Texas, an original affiliate of the National Mental Health Association and state outreach partner for the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), is the state's leading source for mental health information, education and advocacy.

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