

**STATE OF ARKANSAS**  
**EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT**

**PROCLAMATION**

TO ALL TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS COME – GREETINGS:

WHEREAS: In 2018, suicide was the leading cause of violent death in Arkansas, and this state ranks 20<sup>th</sup> in the nation of suicides per capita; and

WHEREAS: The 90<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of Arkansas designated the Arkansas Department of Health as the agency for the purposes of suicide prevention and state and federal programmatic and funding applications; and

WHEREAS: The 91<sup>st</sup> General Assembly of Arkansas mandated that the Arkansas Department of Health establish and maintain a suicide prevention hotline; and

WHEREAS: In the United States someone dies by suicide approximately every 10.9 minutes and in Arkansas, on average, every 16 hours; and

WHEREAS: More than four times as many people die by suicide in Arkansas annually than from alcohol related motor vehicle accidents; the total deaths to suicide reflect a total of 11,608 years of potential life lost before age 65; and

WHEREAS: Suicide affects everyone, but some groups are at higher risk than others in Arkansas. Men are three times more likely than women to die from suicide. However, women are more likely to express suicidal thoughts and to make nonfatal attempts than men. In the United States, the prevalence of suicidal thoughts, suicide planning, and suicide attempts is significantly higher among young adults aged 18-25 years than it is among adults 26 years and older. Suicide is the second leading cause of death for ages 10-34 years of age; and

WHEREAS: Collaborative statewide suicide prevention efforts should be utilized and encouraged to the maximum extent possible. The stigma associated with mental illness and thoughts of suicide works against suicide prevention efforts by discouraging persons at risk for suicide from seeking life-saving help and by further traumatizing survivors of suicide; and

WHEREAS: On March 5, 2019, the President signed Executive Order 13861 calling for the development of a comprehensive plan to empower Veterans and end suicide through coordinated suicide prevention efforts, prioritized research activities, and strengthened collaboration across the public and private sectors. This plan is known as the President's Roadmap to Empower Veterans and End a National Tragedy of Suicide or PREVENTS; and

WHEREAS: The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has a Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans, and their Families that brings together interagency teams to address Veteran suicide at the state level, and the PREVENTS national public health campaign, will seek to increase awareness of mental health issues and suicide prevention to reduce suicide for all Americans; and

WHEREAS: The State of Arkansas is dedicated to reducing the frequency of suicide attempts and deaths and to easing the pain of survivors affected by the deaths of loved ones who have died by suicide through extensive training, educational programming, and collaboration with all parties who have a vested interest in suicide prevention; and

WHEREAS: Suicide is a national and state public health problem, and suicide prevention is a statewide priority. No single suicide prevention program or effort will be appropriate for all populations or communities, and the State of Arkansas encourages initiatives based on the goals contained in the Arkansas Strategy for Suicide Prevention, which is consistent with the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, ASA HUTCHINSON, Governor of the State of Arkansas, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the laws of the State of Arkansas, do hereby proclaim September 2020, as

SUICIDE PREVENTION AWARENESS MONTH

and September 6<sup>th</sup> through September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020, as

SUICIDE PREVENTION AWARENESS WEEK

and September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020, as

WORLD SUICIDE PREVENTION DAY

across the State, and I encourage my fellow citizens to join in this important observance recognizing that many suicides are preventable and to please call 1-800-273-TALK if they find themselves in crisis.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Arkansas to be affixed this 12<sup>th</sup> day of August, in the year of our Lord 2020.



Asa Hutchinson, Governor