

For Immediate Release

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Concord, NH-The Office of the Medical Examiner (OCME), in a unique collaboration with the support of YSPA (Youth suicide Prevention Assembly), the DHHS Bureau of Behavioral Health, and The National Alliance On Mental Illness (NAMI NH) Frameworks Youth Suicide Prevention Project, announces an innovative project to support families and next of kin who have lost a loved one to suicide. Beginning January 1st, 2007, the OCME will send a packet of supportive resource materials to the next of kin of *all* people who die by suicide in New Hampshire. For the past 18 months, a similar packet has been provided to next of kin for youth and young adults who have died by suicide. Based on positive feedback the decision was made to expand this to the next of kin of all suicide deaths in NH. Chief medical examiner Dr. Tom Andrew places his full support behind the initiative stating “OCME is pleased to partner with NAMI NH in this effort. This outreach to survivors is part of our commitment to public health and raising awareness regarding suicide”.

In 2005, 160 New Hampshire residents, between the ages of ten and eighty-five or above, died by suicide. Each of these people left behind many family members, loved ones, and colleagues who are greatly affected by their death. Suicide is the second leading cause of death in New Hampshire for youth: there are also very high rates for men between the ages of 25-35 and for elders.

As Cynthia Pfeffer, M.D., Professor of Psychiatry at Cornell University Medical College states, “The 30,000 suicides that occur every year in the United States leave many people profoundly affected and bereaved. These people are often referred to as ‘suicide survivors’, a term that suggests that bereavement resulting from suicide is especially severe, or is otherwise distinct from ‘normal’ mourning”. The survivor Resource packet was developed by the New Hampshire Survivors of Suicide committee and includes information regarding available local and national resources (counseling, hotlines, internet, reading, music, articles) specifically designed to meet the unique needs of those left behind by the tragedy of suicide. The contents of the Survivor Resource Packet will also be available at www.naminh.org for anyone interested.

Many additional suicide awareness and prevention programs are presented year round by the New Hampshire Youth suicide Prevention Association (YSPA) and the New Hampshire chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI NH). Please visit www.naminh.org for more information. For more information, please Contact: Becky McEnany, NAMI NH at bmcenany@naminh.org or 1-800-242-6264.

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