

Letter: Know the signs

September 5, 2023



September is Suicide Awareness and Prevention Month.

National data shows that 58% of men and 33% of women who die by suicide used a firearm, averaging 54%. I don't have firearm usage for California, but across the border in Curry County in 2021, 72% of our deaths by suicide were by handguns. 50% of them women. Curry had as many women use a firearm as Washington County, with over 600,000 citizens and Clackamas and Deschutes Counties combined. This should be a wake-up call for City and County government AND all citizens.

I've talked with literally thousands of rural men about firearms and suicide throughout 26 Midwestern and Western states since 1995. I estimate roughly 70% of them said they owned a firearm, 40% of them bought one for home protection, and 30% kept one loaded in the house, most in the bedroom. I asked if they ever had to use a firearm in a home invasion? I have yet to have a man answer "Yes."

The reason I bring this up is that national statistics show that of the youth who die by suicide using a firearm, 78% of them found it in their home. That's terrible odds to leave a firearm loaded or not locked up in these times of high depression and anxiety rates for our youth and seeing youth as young as five dying by suicide using a firearm.

Look for the "People who love guns love you" gun safety brochures at gun shops and the R U OK? brochures and crisis wallet cards at over 53 retail locations throughout Crescent City and 7 in Smith River.

Find the locations at ZeroAttempts.org/partners.html to learn what people are saying, doing and going on in their lives and how to help. Suicide is preventable. Know to signs.

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