Session 4D: Suicide Risk Factors and Prevention Research and Discussion (Part 2)
October 18, 2017, 11:00 am - 12:00 pm

Moderator: Cheryl Rosa, USARC Deputy Director
Presenter: Carrie Eischens, USARC Research Program Coordinator
U.S. Arctic Research Commission

- Independent federal agency

- Recommends national Arctic research priorities, policy, and goals necessary to construct a federal program plan

- Recommendations can be for basic and applied scientific research

- Coordinates working groups to examine and develop research needs for specific topics

www.arctic.gov
USARC Working Groups

Alaska Rural Water and Sanitation Working Group
https://arctic.gov/water-san/index.html

Arctic Renewable Energy Working Group
https://arctic.gov/arewg/index.html

Arctic Mental Health Working Group
https://arctic.gov/amhwg/
Formed in late 2015 to raise awareness of, and promote research on, the significant mental and behavioral health disparities that exist between Arctic and non-Arctic populations.
Members:

Laila Allen  
DOC

Laura Baez  
ANTHC

Michael Baldwin  
Mental Health Trust

Debra Caldera  
ALPHA

Cody Chipp  
APIA

Kathy Craft  
AK Health Workforce Coalition

Roberto Delgado  
NIMH

Ray Droby  
Norton Sound Health Cooperative

James Gallanos  
DHSS

Vandana Ingles  
Mat-Su Health Foundation

Melissa Kemberling  
Mat-Su Health Foundation

Angela Mark  
SAMHSA

Grant Rich  
DHSS

Amanda Slaunwhite  
UAA

Asisun Toovak  
North Slope Borough HSS

Lisa Wexler  
UMass

Not pictured: Deborah Hull-Jilly - DHSS
MISSION

To strengthen systems of care to prevent suicide and improve mental health in the circumpolar North via the promotion of indigenous knowledge, research, and evidence-based early intervention and primary prevention efforts.

Initial focus on suicide prevention in Arctic communities with a specific emphasis on early intervention approaches for children and youth.
NEW: Understanding the impacts of climate change on mental health.
Data Objective Rationale

- Multitude of complex issues related to suicide, suicidality and behavioral health issues

- Need to understand issues and affected populations from a broader viewpoint across various public health and service systems
Data Objective Efforts to date

• Encourage research and activities that improve communication among agencies addressing mental and behavioral health in Alaska.

• Hosted 2017 ALHPA Health Summit session focused on how integration of multiple data streams could improve mental health care.

• Hosted recent session on Development of an Alaska Suicide Surveillance Model.
Critical component of addressing the mental and behavioral health needs of children and youth in Alaska’s communities is the presence of a well-trained cadre of mental health providers.

Per capita number of mental health providers in Alaskan communities is below national levels.
Workforce Capacity Objective Efforts to date

- Information gathering for and publication of Alaska’s Mental Health Care Workforce Shortage highlighting Needs and Research Recommendations
Research Recommendations for Addressing Mental Health Care Provider Shortage

1. Establish *Alaska-specific* estimates for the number and types of mental health care providers needed

2. Understand and predict how the redesign of Alaska’s Medicaid program and the potential integration of mental and primary health care will impact the shortage of mental health care providers
Research Recommendations for Addressing Mental Health Care Provider Shortage

3. Create research-informed alternative approaches to providing mental health care in remote areas.

4. Investigate job satisfaction and retention to better understand how to grow and strengthen the mental health workforce.
Protective Factors Objective Rationale

• Need to understanding the impact of family, community and cultural protective factors that support healthy development of youth

• Need to understand the importance of follow-up support for children and youth at risk
Protective Factors Objective Efforts to date

Search Institute Assets Program

Impacts of peer support networks on youth mental health

Brainstorming

What makes the healthy villages healthy?

Research done to date on protective factors and suicide prevention in youth
Climate Change Objective Rationale

- Gradual impacts may cause chronic psychological consequences

- Extreme weather events or natural disasters can result in acute consequences for psychological well-being
Climate Change Objective Efforts to date

- Will be creating a subgroup to begin discussing research needs and gaps

- ecoAmerica presentation on MENTAL HEALTH AND OUR CHANGING CLIMATE: Impacts, Implications, and Guidance

- Feedback on research needs related to climate change and mental health in Alaska
## Research Priority Input

Are these appropriate focus areas?

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<th>Data Integration</th>
<th>Mental Health Workforce Capacity</th>
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<td>Protective Factors</td>
<td>Climate Change Impacts on Mental Health</td>
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Are there additional research areas we should be looking at?

What are the research gaps?