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For Immediate Release

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Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department Recognizes Suicide Prevention Month

September is recognized nationwide as Suicide Prevention Month, a time to raise awareness, reduce stigma, and share resources that can save lives. Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) encourages community members to take steps to support their mental health and know where to turn during a crisis.

About 1 in 8 adults in southwest Nebraska are struggling with their mental health, according to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This means that they report experiencing poor mental health, defined as having 14 or more days in the past 30 days when their mental health was not good.

“Poor mental health affects not only individuals but also families, workplaces, and entire communities,” said Kay Schmidt, Emergency Response Coordinator. “Suicide Prevention Month is an important reminder that help is available, hope is real, and recovery is possible.”

One of the most critical resources available is the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. By dialing 988, individuals can connect 24/7 with trained counselors who provide free and confidential support to anyone experiencing thoughts of suicide, a mental health crisis, or substance use struggles.

Ways you can help during Suicide Prevention Month:

- **Know the signs.** Watch for withdrawal, hopelessness, mood changes, or talking about wanting to die.
- **Reach out.** If you’re concerned about someone, ask directly if they’re okay. Listening and showing you care can make a difference.
- **Share resources.** Remind friends, family, and coworkers that calling **988** is a simple way to get immediate help.
- **Take care of yourself.** Prioritize mental wellness by staying connected, practicing self-care, and seeking professional help if needed.

“Together, we can create a community where no one feels alone in their struggles,” added Schmidt. “Sharing the message about 988 and encouraging open conversations about mental health are steps everyone can take to prevent suicide.”

For more information about mental health resources and community programs, visit swhealth.crediblemind.com, talk to your mental health provider, or contact SWNPHD at 308-345-4223. Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties. You can follow SWNPHD on Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram.