



The Maryland State Medical Society

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MEDCHI SUPPORTS NATIONAL SUICIDE AWARENESS MONTH

BALTIMORE, September 27, 2019 — September is National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month and MedChi is using this month to share resources in an effort to shed light on this still highly stigmatized topic. It is important to remember that suicidal thoughts, although common, should not be considered normal and often indicate more serious issues.

Suicide is a national health problem that is currently the 2nd leading cause of death for ages 10 – 24 and one of the leading causes of preventable death in the United States. Suicidal thoughts can affect anyone regardless of age, gender or background.

A mental health disorder, particularly a mood disorder such as depression, can be a big risk factor of having suicidal thoughts, but it is not the only one. A recent or serious loss, prior suicide attempts, alcohol and other substance use disorders, and stigma associated with asking for help can all be contributors.

There are resources available to those who are in crisis or know someone who is. First and foremost, if you or someone you know is in an emergency, please call 911 immediately. If you are in crisis or are experiencing difficult or suicidal thoughts, you can call the National Suicide Hotline at 1-800-273 TALK (8255).

If physicians are experiencing suicidal thoughts, they can reach out to the MedChi Physician Health Program (MPHP). MPHP assists physicians and physician assistants in a confidential, private setting to address issues that may potentially impact their ability to practice medicine. The Program assesses and refers participants to clinically appropriate treatment, helps the participant develop a rehabilitation plan, provides case management to facilitate progress with the plan, and provides advocacy on behalf of the client when needed. The program also provides education and outreach to the medical community regarding physician impairment and available services.

Dr. Benjamin Stallings, MedChi President, states “everyone can benefit from honest conversations about mental health conditions and suicide and just one conversation can change a life. Please make sure to reach out to someone if you are having any kind of suicidal thoughts and make sure you listen and take it seriously if you are on the receiving end of one of these pleas.”

About MedChi

MedChi, The Maryland State Medical Society, is a non-profit membership association of Maryland physicians. It is the largest physician organization in Maryland. The mission of MedChi is to serve as Maryland's foremost advocate and resource for physicians, their patients and the public health of Maryland. For more information, please visit www.medchi.org.