

# 2019 Mesa County Suicide Report

Suicide prevention is a health priority in Mesa County. Health priorities are areas in which public health partners and the community can make the greatest impact based on current resources, political will, and community readiness.

Suicide is death caused by injuring oneself with the intent to die. Risk factors include previous suicide attempts, history of mental disorders (e.g. clinical depression), isolation, easy access to lethal methods, and history of alcohol and/or substance abuse.

## Key Takeaways

**For every death by suicide in 2019, there were approximately 13 suicide-related visits to an emergency department (ED) in Mesa County.**

### Comparison to 2018

- There was a decrease in suicide deaths.
- Fewer females died by suicide in 2019 than in previous years.
- The main cause of death and attempts remained the same as previous years: gunshot wound and overdose, respectively.
- Prescription medications remained the main cause of intentional overdose.
- More individuals who died by suicide had a reported previous suicide attempt (nearly 6 in 10).
- There were approximately two times as many Suicide Risk Screeners (SRS) administered. This most likely reflects the increase in staff training to identify suicide risk and use the screener.
- As in 2018, nearly half of the individuals who died by suicide had contact with behavioral health, law enforcement, and/or primary care 90 days prior to their death.
- Fewer individuals age 70+ died by suicide.

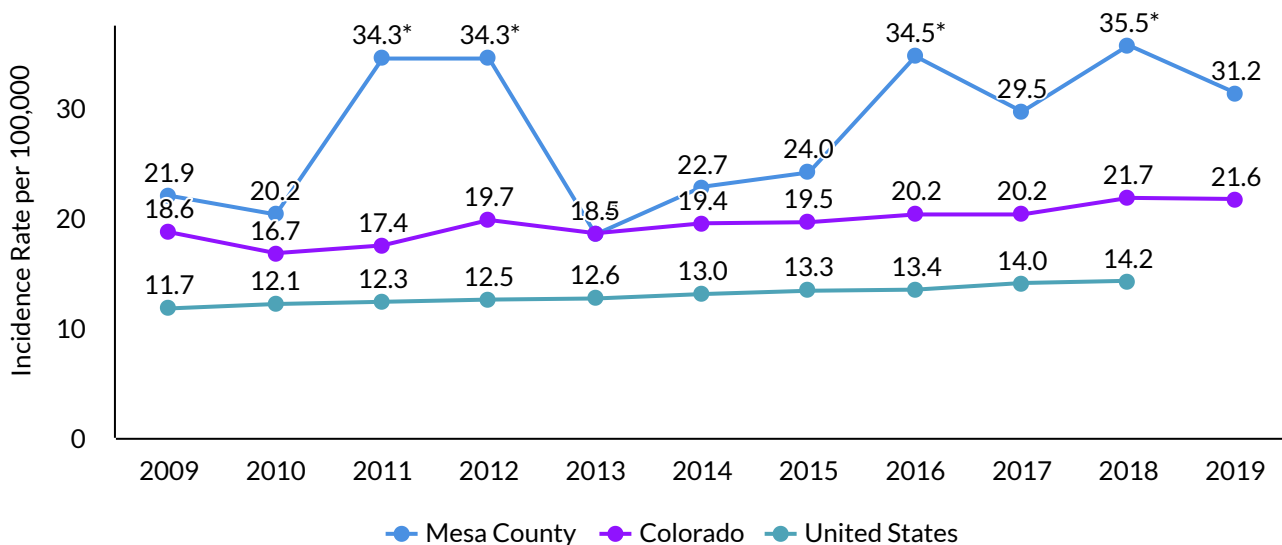
### Reporting

- Nearly 1 in 4 Safe2Tell calls were related to a suicide threat.
- A majority of Suicide Risk Screeners administered at D51 are initiated by a staff concern or self-report.

### Risk and Protective Factors

- The most commonly identified risk factor for students (K-12) was family problems.
- The mostly commonly reported protective factor for students (K-12) was family support.

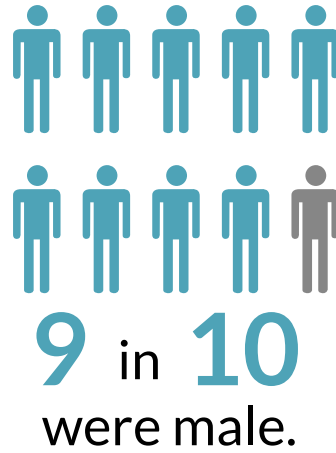
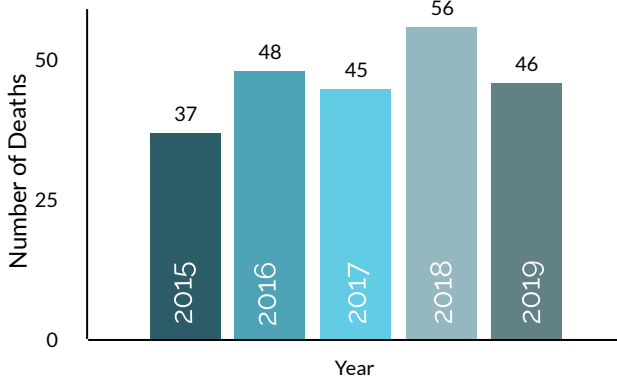
## Rate of Suicide Deaths in Mesa County, Colorado and the United States, 2009-2019



\*Statistically higher than the state

# Deaths by Suicide

## Suicide Deaths by Year, 2015-2019

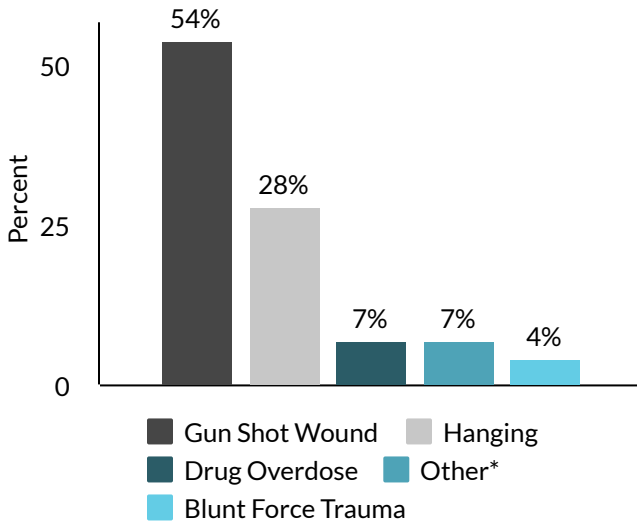


## Average Age

46

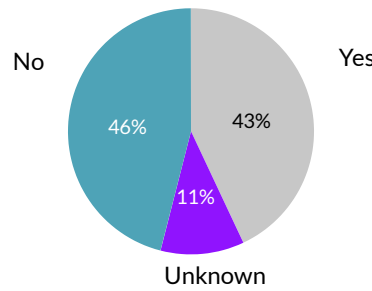
Age Range: 12-88 years

## Method

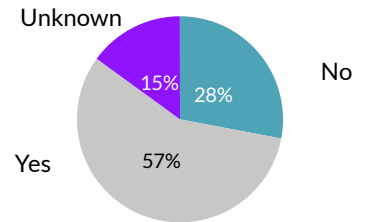


\*Other represents one of each of the following: sharp force trauma, drowning, and nitrogen gas poisoning

## Drug and/or Alcohol Involvement



## Previous Suicide Attempt\*



\*Reported by family or friend, may be an underestimate.

## Contact in the Last 90 Days With:

Law Enforcement

21%

Primary Care

17%

Behavioral Health

15%

# Suicide Attempts and Ideation

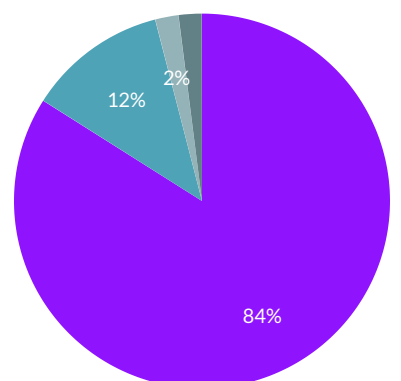
Data was collected on suicide attempts and incidents of suicidal ideation resulting in an emergency department visit in Mesa County during 2019. A majority of the data are based on ICD-10 primary diagnosis code, which limits inclusion of attempts by methods other than drug overdose. Data were reported by St. Mary's Medical Center, Community Hospital, Grand Junction VA Medical Center, and Colorado Canyons Hospital and Medical Center. The data does not include any attempts that were directly admitted to West Springs Hospital.

309

Attempts\*

\*Estimate based on emergency department data pulled by various methods by hospital, including ICD-10 code and chart review.

## Method



Drug Overdose (84%) Other (12%)  
Sharp Force (2%) Hanging (2%)

## Top 3 Causes of Overdose

1. Antidepressants
2. Benzodiazepines (e.g. Xanax)
3. Antipsychotics

A wide variety of over-the-counter, prescription, and illicit substances were involved in overdoses.

The top two substances are the same as 2018.

315

**ED Visits for Ideation\***

Suicidal ideation, also known as suicidal thought, is thinking about, considering, or planning suicide. It can range from a passing thought to detailed planning.



Approximately **6** in **10** were female.

**Average Age**

33

**Age Range:**  
9-92 years

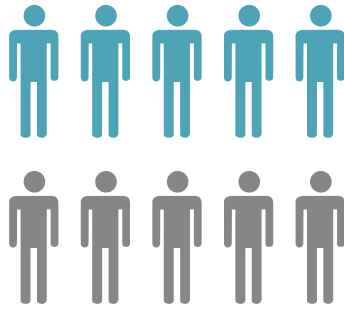
**Suicide Risk Screeners**

When school personnel at Mesa County Valley School District 51 are concerned about a student, they make a referral to trained staff to complete a Suicide Risk Screener (SRS). This assessment determines the level of intervention required and can initiate immediate safety planning. The number of referrals is related to staff awareness and concern about behaviors that may be warning signs. The following section reflects data from the 2018-2019 school year.

1,197

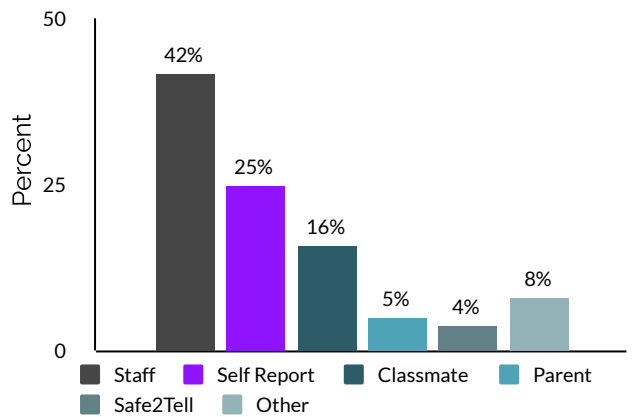
**Screeners\***

There were nearly twice as many screeners completed this school year compared to last.

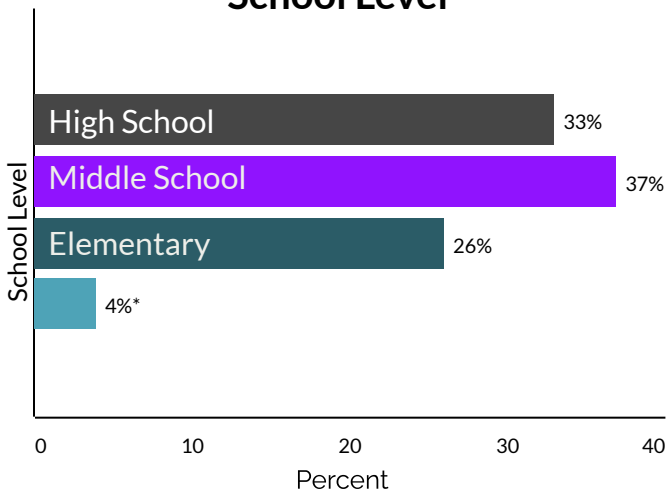


Approximately **half** were male.

**Who is Reporting?**



**School Level**



\*Other includes schools with combined school types, including K-12 schools.

8th grade

Highest rate of Screeners.

**Top Four Risk Factors\***

1. Family Problems
2. Schoolwork
3. Conflict
4. Isolation

**Top Three Protective Factors\***

1. Family Support
2. Mentors
3. Friends

\*Self-reported by students.

**Safe2Tell**

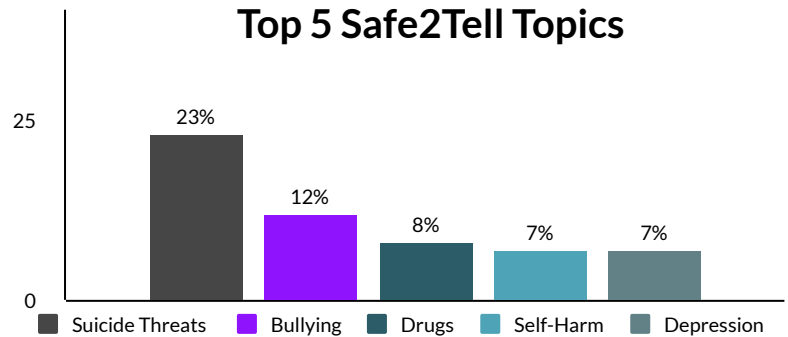
Safe2Tell is an anonymous way for students, parents, school staff and community members to report concerns regarding their safety or the safety of others.

653

**Reports\***

\*Excludes duplicate reports for 2018/2019 D51 school year.

**Top 5 Safe2Tell Topics**



# Community Efforts

## Public Health Recommendations

- Increase connectedness to enhance social capital.
- Maintain educational programming to generate community awareness and reduce mental health stigma.
- Expand amount and variety of support services for attempt and loss survivors.
- Strengthen economic support to increase stability in food, housing, and employment.
- Expand access to suicide care.

## Prevention Activities from 2019

### Economic Stability

- Local support of Blueprint to End Hunger Initiative (Statewide).
- Continued increasing licensed child care spots through the Child Care 8,000 initiative.

### Lethal Means Safety

- Added 3 prescription take back locations for 8 locations total.
- Continued implementing Counseling on Access to Lethal Means (CALM) training for Behavioral Health Providers.
- Gun lock distribution by VA through community partners at multiple events throughout the county.

### Increase Connectedness

- Community Transformation Group (CTG) in Clifton.
- Fruita Youth Initiative (FYI) and Fruita Youth Action Council (FYAC) supporting youth in the Fruita community.
- Promotion of Colorado 2-1-1 for local community resources and referrals.

### Education and Awareness

- 3,488 community members trained in evidence-based suicide prevention.
- Counseling and Education Center (CEC) facilitated Resiliency Class.
- CAMS training for community providers.
- MCPH awarded SAMHSA grant to implement Botvin LifeSkills Program.

### Access to Care

- Between July - December, 638 crisis specific 911 calls (46.5%) resulted in treatment at the home.
- Implementation of Zero Suicide, a system-wide, organizational commitment to safer suicide care at St. Mary's Hospital and Mind Springs Health.
- D51 utilized an enhanced suicide risk screener and continued training among staff.

### Postvention Services

- Continued implementing the Suicide Postvention Pilot Project at GJPD for loss survivors.
- Media training and implementation of safe reporting guidelines.

## Data

Data is essential for:

- Understanding the scope of the problem
- Identifying risk and protective factors
- Program implementation
- Evaluation of current efforts

## Community Partners

- Mesa County Coroner's Office
- St. Mary's Medical Center
- Community Hospital
- Colorado Canyons Hospital & Medical Center
- School District 51
- Mind Springs Health
- 911 Dispatch
- Grand Junction VA Medical Center
- Colorado Mesa University
- Workforce Center

## Colorado National Collaborative:

The Colorado National Collaborative (CNC) is a partnership of local, state and national scientists and public health professionals working with health and social service agencies, nonprofit organizations, government agencies, businesses, academic organizations and Colorado residents to identify, promote, and implement comprehensive state and community-based strategies for suicide prevention in Colorado. Mesa County is a proud participant in the CNC and is working towards the goal of a 20% reduction in suicide by the year 2024.

## Sources

- Mesa County Public Health Suicide Attempt Surveillance, 2019
- Mesa County Coroner's Office, Suicide Death Data
- Colorado Health Information Dataset (CoHID)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- School District 51, 2018-2019