

September 2024

UNIVERSITY OF
Nebraska PUBLIC POLICY
CENTER



POLICYTALK

The Latest in Public Policy
Center News and Events

Featured News



Nebraska Suicide Prevention

Data from the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (NEDHHS) shows that men in Nebraska aged 25-64 have a suicide rate nearly twice the state average, with rural men dying by suicide at a rate 2.5 times higher than men in urban areas. The University of Nebraska Public Policy Center (NUPPC), in cooperation with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), launched a media campaign during September for National Suicide Prevention Month that encourages men to reach out to the 988 suicide & crisis lifeline. This campaign spans across radio, television, YouTube, Spotify, social media, ads in print materials, and the suicideprevention.unl.edu website. In addition, this campaign and activities related to expanding the effectiveness of 988 have been featured on **Nebraska Today** and **NUPPC's news**.

NUPPC's ongoing suicide prevention efforts also include a

partnership with NEDHHS and BoysTown aimed at improving protocols, services, and awareness of the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline across Nebraska counties. A 911 and 988 partnership for transferring calls to 988 when appropriate will be one of the upcoming service improvements that will follow established protocols. Learn more on **KFOR Now** and **1011 Now**.

Community Sessions Collect Feedback on How to Make Lincoln More Age-Friendly



In partnership with Aging Partners, the NUPPC conducted eight listening sessions in July and August to give underrepresented community members an opportunity to provide feedback on how to make Lincoln more livable for the community members as they age. Across eight sessions, a total of 131 residents participated, including residents who spoke Vietnamese, Ukrainian, and Spanish. This project followed the City of Lincoln's enrollment into AARP's Network

of Age-Friendly States and Communities at the start of 2024. Input from these sessions will inform the prioritization and implementation of age-friendly efforts in Lincoln over the next three to five years, as people ages 65 and older are Lincoln's fastest growing segment of the population.

Partner Highlight



Psychological First Aid for Schools Workshops

Dr. Melissa Brymer and Dr. Kristine Louie, from the National Child Traumatic Stress Network, facilitated Psychological First Aid for Schools Train-the-Trainer workshops for Nebraska educators.

The University of Nebraska Public Policy Center received a SAMHSA Mental Health

Awareness Training (MHAT) grant to partner with the Nebraska Department of Education to train educators in Psychological First Aid in Schools (PFA-S). To date the project has trained 323 Nebraska educators. This summer and fall, three trainings across Nebraska (ESU 3 in La Vista, ESU 13 in Scottsbluff and ESU 9 in

Hastings) trained 52 individuals to provide regional PFA-S trainings and increase capacity for implementing the intervention statewide.

Events

Great Plains ATAP Fall Training Event

Hilton (Omaha, NE)

In-Person & Zoom:

Oct. 10 & 11, 2024

The annual **Great Plains Association of Threat Assessment Professionals (ATAP) Training Event** brings

experts from the behavioral threat assessment and management (BTAM) field. This year's event will examine the current state of prevention and communication in behavioral threat assessment and management. Speakers include Dr. Denise Bulling, Dr. Karie Gibson, Dr. John Rozel, Dr. Mario Scalora, Andre Simons, and Dr. Lynn Van Male. [Learn more.](#)



Center News

Spread of Misinformation Following GA School Shooting Put NE Schools on Alert - NUPPC Director Consulted



Across Nebraska, several possible school threats were reported, with several of them coming from information spread through social media. This increase in reports follows the mass shooting at a school in Georgia ([CS Monitor](#)). Dr. **Mario Scalora**, NUPPC Director, said "it's important to 'report, not repost' to avoid causing more fear and to stop the spread of misinformation" when it comes to school threats. "These things can be very, very stressful for not only the families who see this kind of information, but also for the district to have to constantly assess and address those issues" ([The North Platte Telegraph](#)). This month, Dr. Scalora was featured on NU President Jeffrey P. Gold's [Rural Health Matters](#) broadcast to discuss his work in the area of threat assessment. Dr. Scalora speaks about current challenges and approaches to risk and threat assessment.

Research Specialist Presents on National Data Analysis



In order to prevent violent deaths, including homicides and suicides, we first need to understand the contributing factors to these premature losses of life. NUPPC Senior Research Specialist, **Ashley Miller** is the Program Manager of the State Unintentional Drug Overdose Reporting System (SUDORS) and the Nebraska Violent Death Reporting System (**NEVDRS**). On September 4, Ashley presented a webinar

title "Everything You Need to Know about the NEVDRS". This presentation discussed the NEVDRS and its role in collecting comprehensive data, including demographics and circumstances that contributed to the violent deaths across the state. This database has been utilized for the Nebraska Comprehensive Suicide Prevention Project (top). Violent death data is available by request.

Welcolme New Research Coordinators



The NUPPC has welcomed three new research coordinators to the team (pictured left to right): **Kaela White**, **Luisa Del Castillo**, and **Grant Van Robays**. Kaela joined the Center after earning a bachelor's in psychology at Buena Vista University. After previously working at Region V Systems on the Nebraska Strong Recovery Project, Luisa joined the NUPPC. Grant earned a bachelor's in political science

(University of Nebraska-Omaha) and a Master of Public and International Affairs degree (University of Pittsburgh).

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