



**November 6, 2013**

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## **Action Alliance and Universal Health Services, Inc. advance national suicide prevention model**

### ***Unique Partnership Aims to Dramatically Reduce Suicides***

**Washington, DC**—The National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention (Action Alliance), a public-private partnership, is teaming up with one of the nation’s largest hospital management companies, Universal Health Services, Inc. (UHS), to strengthen the country’s clinical capacity to provide innovative suicide prevention and care. The partnership significantly advances one of the central priorities of the Action Alliance – to transform health systems and reduce suicides—and marks UHS’ commitment to be at the leading edge of the transformation.

“I am honored that UHS is partnering with the Action Alliance to further our goal to save 20,000 lives over the next five years,” said the Honorable Gordon H. Smith, private-sector co-chair of the Action Alliance and President and CEO of National Association of Broadcasters. “Sharing their expertise in mental health care and incorporating what we call the Zero Suicide model into their hospitals will greatly benefit patients. Suicide is preventable, and with their support, ending this tragic event in families and communities across our great nation is within reach.”

UHS, the largest facility-based provider of mental health services in the United States, will implement the Action Alliance’s ground-breaking model, as well as, build upon its own community outreach mission. The Zero Suicide approach will become institutionalized at UHS, setting the stage for the approach to become increasingly recognized as delivering superior suicide prevention, care, and treatment. Through this collaboration, UHS will also educate and train thousands of UHS behavioral health clinicians to provide suicide care and establish a strengthened community outreach effort to help community members take action to prevent suicide.

“The relationship between UHS and the Action Alliance is unique, and together we are sending the message to the populations we serve that suicide is preventable,” said Debra Osteen, President, Behavioral Health Division of UHS. “As a leader in behavioral health services, UHS looks forward to successfully implementing the Zero Suicide initiative throughout UHS’ clinical settings nationwide. At UHS we take pride in our commitment to pursue the highest standards of excellence in this critically important area of practice.”

“We must work to eliminate suicide among people receiving health care,” said Mike Hogan, Public Sector Co-Lead of the Action Alliance’s Clinical Care & Intervention Task Force and former Chair of the President’s New Freedom Commission on Mental Health. “The tools are available to help us accomplish that goal. The partnership with UHS will move us forward and help us get closer to reaching this goal.”

By joining in the Action Alliance’s Zero Suicide initiative, UHS will provide critical support for the development, implementation, and evaluation of a “whole-system” approach. UHS will fund the Zero Suicide website, which will serve as a resource for health care systems. This approach will improve care for suicidal patients, and ultimately diminish subsequent suicide attempts and deaths; curbing devastation caused to families and loved ones. This innovative, leading-edge initiative builds on the momentum of the 2011 Action Alliance *Suicide Care in Systems Framework paper*.

The adoption of a comprehensive set of standards, procedures, trainings, and policies by health care systems is groundbreaking in terms of its potential to significantly improve care and outcomes for individuals at risk of suicide. Ultimately, this model will be adapted to varied clinical settings with a goal of becoming a universally accepted, evidence-based approach to suicide prevention in health care.

The Action Alliance and UHS will strengthen community outreach through the dissemination of educational materials on suicide prevention in UHS’ 195 facilities and the communities in which it operates. These materials will help communities take action to prevent suicide, as well as make clinical and social service providers aware of UHS’ commitment to suicide prevention and care.

#### **The National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention**

(Action Alliance; [www.ActionAllianceforSuicidePrevention.org](http://www.ActionAllianceforSuicidePrevention.org)) is the public-private partnership advancing the *National Strategy for Suicide Prevention* (NSSP) by championing suicide prevention as a national priority, catalyzing efforts to implement high-priority objectives of the NSSP, and cultivating the resources needed to sustain progress. Launched in 2010 by Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius and former Defense Secretary Robert Gates, the Action Alliance envisions a nation free from the tragic event of suicide with a goal of saving 20,000 lives in five years.

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#### **Universal Health Services, Inc.**

(UHS; [uhsinc.com](http://uhsinc.com)) Universal Health Services, Inc. is one of the nation's largest hospital management companies. The UHS Behavioral Health Division operates 195 facilities with over 20,000 behavioral health beds in 37 states, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands – making it the largest facility-based provider of mental health services in the United States. The Behavioral Health Division, driven by the mission to be the provider of choice in all communities it serves, offers a full range of behavioral treatment services for children, adolescents, adults and older adults, and provides innovative specialty programs in the areas of eating disorders, sexual trauma, and autism spectrum disorders and specialized programs for military members, veterans and their families.