



Congresswoman
Grace F. Napolitano
Representing California's 32nd District

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Reps. Napolitano & Katko Fight Stigma, Co-Host World Suicide Prevention Day Briefing

(Washington, DC) Today, Reps. Grace F. Napolitano (D-CA-32) and John Katko (R-NY-24) recognized World Suicide Prevention Day by co-hosting a briefing examining federal investments in suicide prevention.

“On World Suicide Prevention Day we are fortunate to have national organizations here to brief Members of Congress and their staff on suicide prevention methodology, training, and funding. With suicide attempts among youth on the rise and 22 veterans dying by suicide daily, it is time we invest in suicide prevention to reduce mortality rates just as we have for HIV/AIDS, heart disease, and other leading causes of death,” **said Congresswoman Napolitano**. “We also need to ensure medical institutions train all personnel to recognize the warning signs and symptoms to prevent suicide ideation and attempts. We are very thankful for Congressman Katko’s willingness to work collaboratively on suicide prevention. We look forward to continuing to work together to reduce stigma, secure new funding, and raise critical awareness for mental health.”

“Sadly, suicide has impacted far too many families across our country. As we honor World Suicide Prevention Day, I was proud to join my colleague Rep. Napolitano and some of our national partners in mental health to host today’s discussion and raise awareness for suicide prevention,” **said Congressman Katko**. “It is my hope that together, we can help to combat the prevalence of suicide and provide greater support for individuals who suffer. Mental health is an issue that must be continually brought to the forefront for significant change to occur, and I thank Rep. Napolitano for her leadership on this issue.”

Representatives from the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention, the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), and the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) joined Napolitano and Katko for a briefing and panel discussion, illustrating how investments in suicide prevention research are severely lagging compared to research on other leading causes of death.

“The recent findings of the Mental Health and Suicide Survey show the vast majority of American adults think suicide requires more research to save lives. With this knowledge,

as a country, we must invest more of our efforts into suicide prevention research, including barriers for seeking help, understanding of the risk factors for suicide and ways to effectively reach those in suicidal despair,” **said Dr. Doryn Chervin**, Executive Secretary of the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention and Vice President and Senior Scientist at Education Development Center, Inc. “Through wide scale research, we will learn of better ways to support, treat and care for those struggling with mental health conditions and suicidal thoughts. It’s all about saving lives.” “Researchers have made notable progress in learning what we can do to reduce suicide risk in health care settings, such as better risk detection and effective treatments that reduce suicidal behaviors,” **said Dr. Jane Pearson**, Chair of NIMH’s Suicide Research Consortium. “We now need to scale-up this knowledge so it guides everyday practice. Health care systems willing to implement and test evidence-based approaches are our natural partners. These learning health care systems provide an ideal platform for improving patient care and reducing suicide outcomes in the short-term, and driving the scientific agenda for future risk detection and prevention studies.”

“AFSP thanks Representatives Grace Napolitano and John Katko for their leadership on suicide prevention and mental health issues,” **said John Madigan**, Vice President of Public Policy for AFSP. “Suicide is a major public health crisis in the United States. Congress should approve at least \$125 million in NIMH funding for suicide prevention research. History has shown the direct correlation between federal investment in NIH medical research and the decrease in mortality for many other diseases.”

Background:

- World Suicide Prevention Day, started in 2003, is held annually on September 10th to raise awareness that suicide is preventable and to decrease the stigma surrounding mental health.
- Suicide has an estimated \$44 billion cost due to work loss and medical care (AFSP).
- Over 40,000 Americans die by suicide every year, and it is the 10th leading cause of death in the United States.
- Napolitano is the Chair of the Congressional Mental Health Caucus. She secured federal funds for a youth suicide prevention program in 2001, after learning that one in three Latina teens had contemplated suicide. Four local schools partnered with health care provider Pacific Clinics to offer on-site, culturally and linguistically appropriate mental health services for students. With Los Angeles County assistance, the program has since expanded to 26 local elementary, middle and high schools and currently has a waiting list.
- The program serves as a model for [H.R. 1211, the Mental Health in Schools Act](#), bipartisan legislation which would create a total of \$200 million in grant funding for 200 schools across the country to partner with local nonprofits to provide early intervention and preventive services for young people with mental health issues.

If you or someone you know needs help, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255). The full briefing: <http://bit.ly/1JYPLTa>