

# Watch for “Signs of Hope” Sept. 9

ALBANY — September 9, Linn County Mental Health staff members will be joined by other health professionals in the mid-valley holding “Signs of Hope” to encourage those who may be contemplating suicide that there is hope and help.



Justin Thomas

They will gather from 10-11 a.m. at the corner of 4<sup>th</sup> and Ellsworth.

Linn County averages 24 suicides per year, according to Justin Thomas, manager of the Linn

County Crisis Team.

“For several years, Oregon has focused on the issue of teen suicide and now we are focusing on the entire age spectrum for suicide awareness,” Thomas said.

Thomas said similar events will be held in counties across Oregon.

Thomas said mental health crisis support is provided 24/7 in Linn County.

“People can call 541-967-3866 24/7 or walk-ins are always welcome at 445 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave., Albany during business hours,” Thomas said.

Thomas said that in addition to Linn County, mental health assistance is also available from private providers and Samaritan Health Services.

He said Linn County can help people enroll in the Oregon Health Plan to pay for services.

“We really hope to make people aware that they matter,” Thomas said.

In 2019, there were 906 deaths by suicide in Oregon, up from 844 deaths by suicide in 2018. But in 2020,

Linn County is one of numerous Regional Suicide Prevention Coali-



**5 Action Steps for Helping Someone in Emotional Pain**

- ASK**  
“Are you thinking about killing yourself?”
- KEEP THEM SAFE**  
Reduce access to lethal items or places.
- BE THERE**  
Listen carefully and acknowledge their feelings.
- HELP THEM CONNECT**  
Save the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline number 1-800-273-8255.
- STAY CONNECTED**  
Follow up and stay in touch after a crisis.

 **NIH** National Institute of Mental Health

[www.nimh.nih.gov/suicideprevention](http://www.nimh.nih.gov/suicideprevention)

tions that will participate as a visual reminder to people they are not alone, that communities are here to help and they can reach out for help.

Partners in this effort are the Oregon Alliance to Prevent Suicide, regional suicide prevention coalitions, Lines for Life, and the Oregon chapter of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention.

“The Signs for Hope campaign helps people to remember that it is normal to struggle, that they are part of community that cares,” said Annette Marcus of the Oregon Alliance to Prevent Suicide.

Facts about suicide in Linn County:

- From 2017-2020 Linn County has averaged approximately 24 deaths by suicide each year.
- Of those lost to suicide, men make up approximately 78% of the deaths by suicide in Linn County.
- 24-49 years of age makes up the largest grouping of deaths by suicide.
- Approximately 57% of all deaths by suicide in Linn County are from gunshot wounds
- It is important to know that resources are out there for support. Linn County and other

agencies have mental health supports in Linn County.

- Linn County Mental Health has a walk-in crisis clinic open 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday at 445 Third Ave SW Albany and a 24-hour crisis line at 541-967-3866 extension 1.
- Safety plans work to prevent deaths by suicide. This often includes using natural supports for the individual in crisis, professional help and lethal means restriction.
- Linn County offers free trainings to community members to gain more information about all things related to mental health, this includes QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer), Mental Health First Aid, and Connect: Postvention (a training that helps agencies know the best strategies of how to respond when someone dies by suicide).

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