

RESOLUTION NO. _____

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, COUNTY OF SAN MATEO, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

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RESOLUTION DECLARING SUICIDE AS A PUBLIC HEALTH CONCERN IN SAN MATEO COUNTY

WHEREAS, according to the National Institute of Mental Health and the Center for Disease Control (CDC), suicide is a major public health concern and one of the leading causes of death in the United States, even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, the COVID–19 pandemic has caused many individuals around the globe to experience significant emotional distress, depressive symptoms, anxiety and suicidal ideation; and

WHEREAS, according to the CDC, various situational and internal factors can contribute to suicide among individuals with and without known mental health conditions, including hardships related to relationships, substance use, physical and/or emotional health, and stress relating to work, finances, legal problems, or housing security; and

WHEREAS, stigma surrounding mental health and suicide can discourage at-risk persons from obtaining life-saving help, yet education and stories of hope and recovery serve to reduce that stigma and encourage people to reach out for support; and

WHEREAS, in San Mateo County, suicide deaths increased 32% from 60 in 2019 to 79 in 2020 while, in California, suicide deaths have decreased by 9% from 4,460 in 2019 to 4,075 suicide deaths in 2020; and

WHEREAS, in San Mateo County, the four leading methods of suicide in descending order for 2019 are hanging, firearm, jumped and motor vehicle and for 2020 are hanging, firearm, jumped and poisonings.

WHEREAS, the San Mateo County Suicide Prevention Committee (SPC) -- created in 2009 and comprised of passionate suicide prevention advocates, including suicide attempt survivors, suicide loss survivors and representatives from behavioral health, primary care, emergency health services, social services, law enforcement, transportation, education, communication & media, art & culture, spirituality & faith, and community members -- provides oversight and direction to suicide prevention efforts in San Mateo County; and

WHEREAS, the SPC recently released the San Mateo County Suicide Prevention Roadmap 2021-2026, its second strategic plan, to prioritize efforts to reduce suicide overall and among specific high-risk communities; and

WHEREAS, while the implementation of the Roadmap is a community-wide effort with diverse partners, the County of San Mateo will work to adopt and promote suicide prevention efforts, such as:

- a) Suicide and suicide prevention safe messaging best practices disseminated to communication and media staff and partners;
- b) Workforce suicide prevention plan for all county employees;
- c) Suicide prevention and mental health resource promotion, including a suicide loss survivor support group, warmlines and hotlines

- d) Firearm safety education that promotes the availability of existing laws and programs to reduce access to firearms for individuals at-risk of suicide, such as gun violence restraining orders and gun buy-back programs; and

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED that the Board of Supervisors of San Mateo County declares suicide a significant public health concern and pledges to implement commitments outlined in the San Mateo County Suicide Prevention Roadmap 2021-2026, such as establishing suicide prevention infrastructure, minimizing risk factors and promoting protective factors of suicide, increasing identification and services based on suicide risk and improving suicide-related services and supports, in order to reduce suicide in San Mateo County.

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