



# BARRY GLASSMAN

HARFORD COUNTY EXECUTIVE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Harford County Launches Campaign to Prevent Youth Suicide; Second Leading Cause of Death for Ages 10 - 14**

**BEL AIR, Md.**, (July 7, 2022) - According to the Centers for Disease Control, suicide is the second leading cause of death nationwide for youth ages 10 – 14. In response, Harford County partners are raising awareness and training community members to intervene.

“It’s heartbreaking to think that any child could feel so hopeless they would consider suicide,” County Executive Barry Glassman said. “We must do all we can to prevent suicide and remove the stigma around mental health that often prevents someone from seeking help. By talking openly and sharing resources we can save lives.”

To raise awareness, the Harford County Office of Drug Control Policy has developed PSAs and billboards that highlight the CDC statistic and a website, [www.HarfordTalks.com](http://www.HarfordTalks.com), for parents and others to learn the signs of suicidal ideation. The PSAs and billboards use images of young people to show that anyone’s child could be at risk.

The 15-second PSAs will be shown later this month at the Regal movie theater in Abingdon and Horizon theaters in Aberdeen and Fallston through September. Beginning August 1, billboard messages will be on display at the intersection of MD Route 1 and Route 543 in Bel Air and along Pulaski Highway (MD Route 40) in Havre de Grace.

Harford County hopes to capture the attention of more than 130,000 individuals, parents, and young adults with the awareness campaign.

In addition, free suicide prevention trainings are being offered monthly to anyone 14 and older.

The interactive, two-hour training, known as Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR), teaches participants to identify someone at risk of suicide and connect them to care. The next training will be from 6 – 8 p.m. on Monday, July 11 at Mt. Zion Church, 1634 Churchville Road in Bel Air. To register, visit <https://www.harfordcountymd.gov/449/Office-of-Drug-Control-Policy>.

Specialized training is also available for youth, veterans, first responders, farmers, and faith-based communities. To learn more, call the Office of Drug Control policy at 410-638-3333.

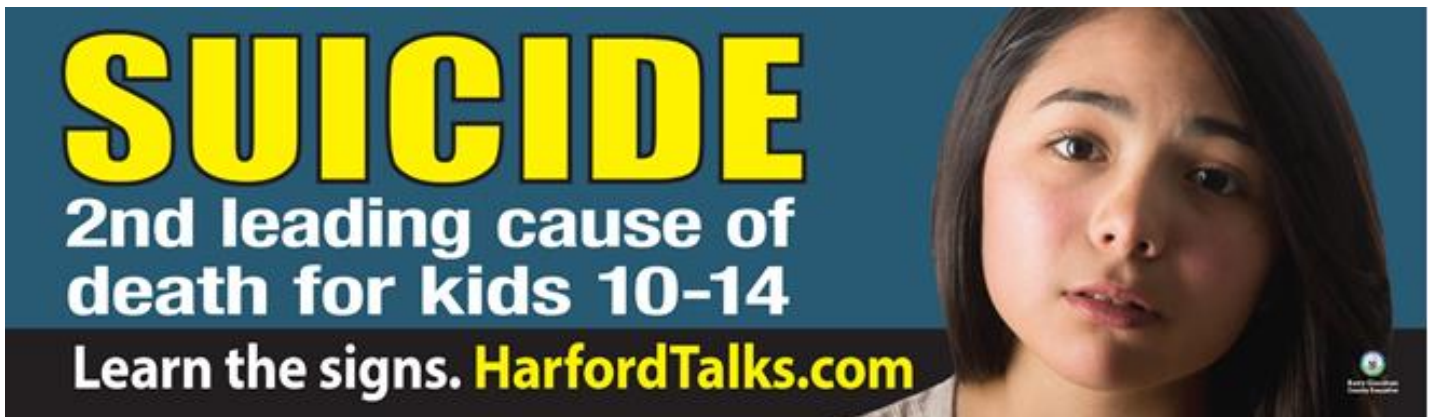
While the warning signs in children can be subtle, learning potential red flags plays a crucial role in intervention. Signs that a child under 14 may be considering suicide include changes in behavior, changes at school, self-isolation, giving away prized possessions, engaging in risky behavior such as using drugs and alcohol, and feeling hopeless.

Harford's campaign stresses the importance of recognizing these signs, feeling comfortable speaking with children openly and honestly, and knowing where to turn for help.

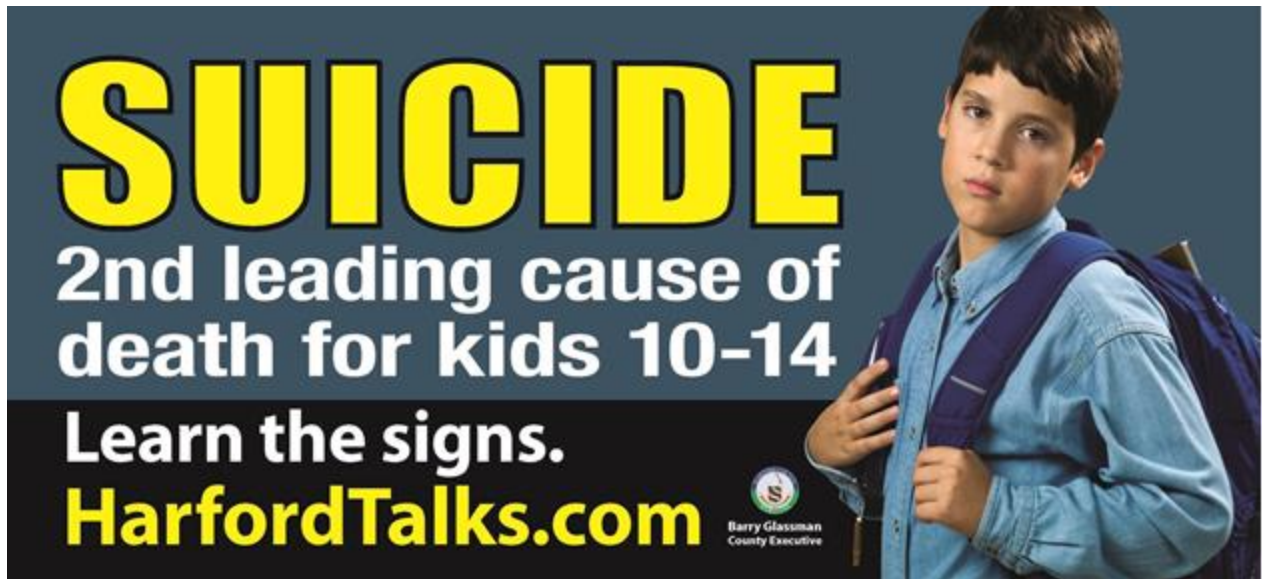
Other efforts to reduce suicide in Harford County include the 24-hour hotline, 1-800-NEXT-STEP and promoting safe storage of firearms and safe disposal of over-the-counter drugs; awareness campaigns to educate healthcare providers about suicide risk, response, and appropriate referral; funding to encourage more suicide bereavement support groups, and youth support groups and trainings to teach healthy coping skills.

A suicide prevention workgroup meets monthly in Harford County to identify opportunities to provide resources and enhance supportive services to prevent suicide. Workgroup members include representatives from Harford County Department of Community Services, Harford County Public Schools, the Klein Family Harford Crisis Center, the Harford County Office of Mental Health, the Health Department, Veteran's Administration, Healthy Harford, the local chapter of American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, Harford Community College, Harford County Sheriff's Office, Bel Air Police Department, Ashley Treatment Services, and other partners.

Anyone interested in helping to reduce suicide in Harford County can call Tara Lathrop, administrator in the Office of Drug Control Policy, at 410-638-3333.



*Billboard planned in Harford County*

A billboard advertisement with a dark blue background. On the right side, there is a photograph of a young boy with dark hair, wearing a light blue button-down shirt and a dark blue backpack, looking slightly to the left. On the left side, the word "SUICIDE" is written in large, bold, yellow capital letters. Below it, the text "2nd leading cause of death for kids 10-14" is written in white. Further down, "Learn the signs." is written in white, followed by "HarfordTalks.com" in large yellow letters. In the bottom right corner of the text area, there is a small circular logo with a white 'S' on a green background, and below it, the text "Barry Glassman County Executive" in small white font.

**SUICIDE**  
2nd leading cause of death for kids 10-14  
Learn the signs.  
**HarfordTalks.com**

Barry Glassman  
County Executive

*Billboard planned in Harford County*

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