Deaths from Suicide: A Look at 18 States

National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS) Special Report on Suicide

MASSACHUSETTS, 2013-2014

Size
Divided into 14 counties covering 7800 square miles

Population
15th most populated state with 6.8 million residents

Race/ethnicity of state population
74% White non-Hispanic, 8% Black, 11% Hispanic or Latino, 7% Asian/Pacific Islander, 1% American Indian/Alaska Native; 2% two or more races

NVDRS participation
Massachusetts Violent Death Reporting System (MAVDRS) joined NVDRS in 2002; first year of data collection in 2003

A LOOK AT SUICIDE IN MASSACHUSETTS

Data from the National Violent Death Reporting System 2013-2014.

TYPES OF VIOLENT DEATHS IN MASSACHUSETTS
- Nearly all (90%) violent deaths occurring in Massachusetts in 2013-2014 were classified as suicide or homicide.
- Suicide was the most common manner of violent death in Massachusetts (N=1184, 73%), occurring 4.2 times more often than homicide (N=285, 18%).
- The remaining deaths from violence were attributed to undetermined manner (N=137, 8%), legal intervention (N=17, 1%), and unintentional firearm death (N=<5, <1%).

SUICIDE IN MASSACHUSETTS
- State rates. Massachusetts’ suicide rate* in 2013-2014 was 8.8/100,000, a 17% increase from 7.5 in 2004-2005 and a 1% increase from 8.7 in 2009-2010.
- State/U.S. comparison. The suicide rate in Massachusetts was 33% lower than the U.S. suicide rate (13.2) and was the second lowest of all NVDRS states.
- Race/ethnicity. Suicide victims were 87% White, 5% Hispanic, 3% Black, 3% Asian/Pacific Islander, 1% other, and <1% two or more races.
- Sex. Males accounted for 76% of suicide victims (15.5/100,000 ages 10+) and females accounted for 24% (4.7/100,000 ages 10+). The suicide rate among males was highest for those ages 45-64 (20.4/100,000). For females, the suicide rate was also highest among those ages 45-64 (6.6/100,000).

Percent in this state profile may not equal 100% due to rounding.

*All rates in this profile are occurrent ratios based on the number of resident and non-residents deaths that occurred in the state per 100,000 resident population.
SUICIDE METHODS
- Hanging/strangulation/suffocation was the method used in 48% of suicides, followed by both use of a firearm (20%) and poisoning (20%).
- Hanging/strangulation was the most common method for both males (49%) and females (45%). Males ages 65+ had the highest firearm suicide rate (7.0/100,000). (See infographic)

ADDITIONAL SUICIDE DEMOGRAPHICS
- Veterans. Nine percent (9%) of suicide victims were identified as veterans (served in the U.S. Armed Forces) on the death certificate, including 29% of victims ages 65+.
- Sexual orientation. Twenty-one (21) victims were identified as gay, lesbian, or bisexual.
- Homeless status. Nine (9) victims were identified as homeless at the time of death.
- Marital status. Thirty percent (30%) of victims were married, 45% were never married, 20% were divorced, 4% were widowed, and 1% had another or unknown marital status.
- Education level. Among victims ages 25+, 45% were a high school or GED graduate, 10% had less than a high school education, 44% had some college or a college degree, and 1% had an unknown education level.

SUICIDE CIRCUMSTANCES
- In 94% of Massachusetts’ deaths by suicide, circumstances were documented in the records (N=1114).
- The most frequently cited circumstances were current mental health problem (55%), current or past mental health treatment (47%), current depressed mood (30%), and relationship problems (29%). A suicide note was left in 35% of the incidents.
- The most frequent or notable circumstances by age group are shown in the chart below.