

## NEWS RELEASE

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# MEXICAN STRATEGIES TO TACKLE SUICIDE

- ***Diagnosing the problem, applying surveys to all the people in elementary schools, and opening a 24/7 telephone line for assistance are part of the plan.***
- ***Through a toll-free line, five people who had the intention of committing suicide were identified and helped.***

An integral plan to prevent suicide has been implemented in the Mexican State of Campeche. This plan includes a diagnosis to know the causes of the problem in this specific Mexican state, the application of surveys and the creation of a toll-free telephone line that is active 24/7 in order to identify and assist people, especially teenagers, who have a suicidal profile and provide them with a specific treatment according to their needs.

In an interview, the Health Secretary of Campeche, Mr. Alfonso Cobos Toledo, highlighted the importance of this program, since Campeche ranks fourth in the suicide levels in Mexico.

In 2013, this Mexican state registered 100 deaths related to suicide. So far, in this year there have been 37 deaths related to suicide; nevertheless, some studies are still being performed to define if these deaths were attributable to suicide or not.

The Health Secretary of Campeche said that the first step taken was to elaborate a study together with the National Institute of Psychiatry "Ramón de la Fuente", in order to identify risks, suicidal ideas and real causes of suicide among the students of elementary and junior high schools.

The results of the study indicated that the causes of suicide are related to domestic violence, dysfunctional and broken families, as well as any type of maternal absence, plus anxiety and depression. The Health Secretary of Campeche mentioned that bullying is also a risk factor among people with suicidal profile.

He pointed out that the Health authorities in the state are working with kids, parents and teachers in places that have a high risk of violence or addictions.



Surveys are applied in order to address the problem either individually or in the family, and the case is followed up.

Furthermore, the number of professionals in psychology was increased and they received training to assist mental health issues.

Most of the mental health problems in this Mexican state are frowned upon by the community and the families. This prevents people from taking the patients to the hospital or to receive psychiatric attention. This is the reason why the specialists go to where the patient is to give him medical attention.

A special toll-free line was activated in order to assist the population in a critical state. This line is open 24/7 and nowadays it receives around 2,000 calls. Through this channel, the population can have their doubts solved, like the side-effects of any type of medication, and request medical attention when they are in crisis.

The telephone line is answered by trained psychologists and has proved to be useful to stop five people from committing suicide. Moreover, 11 municipalities of the state have trained psychologists, violence modules and addiction-attention modules that work together.

Finally, the Secretary of Health in Campeche said that they are implementing a diagnosis tool provided by the Panamerican Health Organization (PAHO), named mhGAP, and that they are training doctors and nurses in the first level of attention to use this strategy in order to strengthen the medical attention in health centers and in places located far away.

## **HIGHLIGHTS:**

- Campeche is one of the states that form part of the Mexican Republic. It is located in southeast Mexico. Campeche represents 5.1% of Mexico's total GDP.
- According to the World Health Organization, suicide is among the top 20 leading causes of death globally for all ages. Every year, nearly one million people die from suicide.

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