



# Iowa Department of Public Health

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November 7, 2012

## FACT SHEET Your Life Iowa

### Program Overview

**Your Life Iowa** will launch on November 28, 2012 as a resource where youth, parents and school personnel can get immediate help and information about bullying and youth suicide. Program components include:

- Toll Free Telephone Hotline is available 24/7 to provide information, brief counseling and information about local resources. Hotline staff are specifically trained on bullying and youth suicide. The Hotline number is **(855) 581-8111**
- Web Site with information and resources about bullying and youth suicide prevention. The web address is **[yourlifeiowa.org](http://yourlifeiowa.org)**
- Texting/ Short Message Service (SMS) offer a timely and relevant way to get help. Texting is quickly becoming the chosen way to communicate, especially among youth. Texting is available 4pm to 8pm, 7 days a week. Text **“talk” to 85511**

### HF2465

As directed in HF 2465 (2012), the IDPH Division of Behavioral Health released a competitive request for proposals to develop a Youth Suicide Prevention program targeting youth who are victims of bullying. Boys Town (Omaha, NE) received the award and project implementation began October 2012. A report and recommendations for the future will be submitted to the Governor and General Assembly in January 2013.

### Bullying and Youth Suicide

Bullying is defined as unwanted, aggressive behavior among school-aged youth that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Both youth who are bullied and who bully others may have serious, lasting problems. Youth perceived as different are at a higher risk of being bullied. Bullying is linked to many negative outcomes including impacts on school performance, mental health, substance use, and suicide. Types of bullying include physical, verbal, social exclusion, spreading rumors and cyber-bullying. Fourteen-percent of 6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> graders responding to the 2010 Iowa Youth Survey reported being physically bullied in the previous 30 days and 30% had been verbally bullied.

There are many different factors that may lead a teenager to take his or her life but the most common is depression. Feelings of hopelessness and anxiety, along with feelings of being trapped in a life that one can't handle, are very real contributors to teen suicide. Both victims and perpetrators of bullying are at higher risk for suicide than their peers. Suicide is the third leading cause of death among those aged 14 to 24 (CDC, 2010). For 11<sup>th</sup> graders responding to the 2010 Iowa Youth Survey, 4% of males and 7% of females have attempted suicide.

### Key Partners

Boys Town will provide the program components defined above. Additionally, Boys Town has developed and distributed promotional materials that include detailed information about resources and services available. Boys Town is certified as a Crisis Center by the American Association of Suicidology.

The Iowa Department of Education Bully Prevention Program has actively participated in planning for Your Life Iowa to support collaboration and ensure compliance with Iowa's 2007 Anti-Bullying Law.

The State of Iowa Youth Advisory Committee (SIYAC) has been invited to participate in implementation of Your Life – Iowa and in the development of recommendations for the January 2013 report to Governor and General Assembly.