

**SUICIDE PREVENTION ALLIANCE OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA**  
**Website Launch Press Release**

**Sept. 30, 2015**

**Northern Virginia Launches Regional Suicide Prevention Initiative: *Reach Out. Find Hope.***

Fairfax, VA — Joining forces in the effort to prevent suicide in Northern Virginia, the region's five community services boards (CSBs) have launched a new website and a coordinated suicide prevention campaign – *Reach Out. Find Hope.* – led by the newly formed Suicide Prevention Alliance of Northern Virginia (SPAN).

“We felt it was important to provide a web-based resource that anyone in our region can use,” said SPAN Chair Jane Woods, “State funding provides support for the region to launch the campaign and website. The new site [www.SuicidePreventionva.org](http://www.SuicidePreventionva.org) provides a quick, user-friendly connection to critical resources and services for Northern Virginians who may be in crisis. It also provides links to information and tools for families, friends and anyone in the community who wants to know more about suicide prevention.”

Launched during Suicide Prevention Month, *Reach Out. Find Hope.* is powered by the SPAN, which was, founded by the community services boards (CSBs) of Alexandria, Arlington, Fairfax-Falls Church, Loudoun and Prince William. CSBs are state-designated behavioral health agencies that offer support and services to promote recovery, self-determination and wellness. The new website compiles resources from each CSB to provide a single point of entry for any community member who may be struggling with mental health issues or contemplating suicide.

“Mental health and suicide are issues that many of our neighbors, family members, friends and coworkers have experience with,” said Woods. “It’s important for all of us to know that support is available, that many people get better with treatment and that suicide is preventable. That’s the message *Reach Out. Find Hope.* is here to promote.”

Woods and Laura Yager, with the Fairfax-Falls Church CSB, briefed regional officials last week about the new website and suicide prevention efforts at a meeting of the Northern Virginia Regional Council. In addition to a crisis hotline and text line, SPAN has supported regional youth-led suicide prevention education efforts, Mental Health First Aid and online suicide prevention training. In the next 12 months, SPAN will involve a broader group of stakeholders, in addition to the CSBs, to support and help grow current strategies.

Northern Virginia officials say it is important to break down the stigma surrounding suicide and mental health issues, which can prevent people from getting the help they need.

“Suicide is preventable, but we have to be willing to talk about it,” says Heather Martinsen with the Prince William CSB. “By pulling together as a region and sharing resources and ideas, we have a great opportunity to educate our communities about the preventable nature of suicide and the local resources we have that can help support recovery.”

“It can be very difficult for someone in crisis to know where to turn for support,” said Martinsen. “We can be a strong network of support for one another. Working together, we can make a real difference and save lives.”

To learn more about SPAN and its suicide prevention efforts, visit the website at [www.SuicidePreventionva.org](http://www.SuicidePreventionva.org) or contact Belinda Buescher at 571-722-9091.

**If you or someone you care about is experiencing a crisis, please contact PRS CrisisLink 24/7, 1-800-273-TALK (8255), (703) 527-4077 or text “CONNECT” to 855-11. If the emergency is life-threatening, call 911.**