

Notes for Retreat 8-7-08
History of Suicide Prevention Coalition of Georgia (SPCG)
per CK

2000-2003

The Suicide Prevention Coalition of Georgia (SPCGA) is an outgrowth of the Steering Committee to the Suicide Prevention Action Network (SPAN USA). SPAN USA with assistance of members of the Steering Committee helped write the Georgia Suicide Prevention Plan and advised and worked on projects to implement the GSPP, partially funded by State grants, from July 2000-July 2003. Some of their activities included:

- (1) Participating in a statewide Suicide Prevention Conference in spring 2002, held at the Carter Center, where the GSPP was formally introduced,
- (2) Organizing three Regional Suicide Prevention Conferences in spring 2003 that were held in Gwinnett County, in Atlanta, and in Valdosta to promote awareness, networking, and collaboration,
- (3) Supporting the initiation of suicide prevention research in to evaluate a gatekeeper education program within Cobb County high schools, and
- (4) Organizing and delivering a well attended workshop on Suicide Prevention at the 2003 Annual Conference of the Student Assistance Professionals Association (SAPA) of Georgia.

In July 2003, individuals and agencies who had been working with SPAN USA came together to form a new group: the Suicide Prevention Coalition of Georgia (SPCGA). This new group expanded membership to include a variety of state agencies,

nonprofit groups, academic representatives and survivors. The new group, SPCGA, included representatives from health (including public health, aging, substance abuse prevention and mental health), education, and faith communities. The group developed its Mission and Vision Statement; it's Mission is to address the problem of suicide in Georgia through collaborative efforts that promote, support, and increase awareness, prevention, and aftercare. SPCGA meets monthly to share information with a wide range of groups working in Georgia on suicide prevention and promotes efforts to implement the Georgia Suicide Prevention Plan. (quoted from proposal of CDC College Grant)

2003-2008

When state funding stopped in Aug 2003, members of the Steering Committee including Carol Koplan, Marti Vogt, Judy Byrnes, Doreen Schultz Marshall, Iris Bolton, Suzann Lindsay and Allan Goldman decided to continue to advance suicide prevention and facilitate the GSPP through networking, collaboration and education.

Some members attended a Regional meeting sponsored by SPRC. The outcome was to have a retreat to develop a vision and mission. A DOE facilitator implemented this project (You have this V&M)

In 2003, one member recommended writing a Compassion Capital Grant whose goal is infrastructure building and sustainability of community organizations. The grant was awarded and used toward the First statewide Stakeholders meeting – Sept 04 and writing a grant for a College Suicide Prevention Conf. The grant from CDC was not awarded due to lack of funding, but laid the foundation for the College Conference in Feb. 2007. The fiscal agent for the First Stakeholders Meeting was The Link.

During this period SPAN-GA was founded and became a 5013C. The SPCG supported SPAN's annual Suicide Prevention Day at the Capital in March often providing speakers and always attending the event. The state eventually provided a line item in the budget for DHR to support suicide prevention enabling hiring a suicide prevention coordinator in the Injury Prev Section and a ½ time epidemiologist.

During this time there was ongoing work by Cobb County to implement and evaluate QPR for staff administrators, and faculty. The director of the Injury Prev Center of the Cobb County schools, a member of the Coalition, was working with researchers from Rochester on this project . The SPCG organized a meeting for the researchers from Rochester to share an update on the project and to explore areas of possible collaboration.

Eventually, the state sought to explore a “rural project” since there are increased suicides in rural areas. This project which sought recommendations to serve rural youth was moved forward by Sheri MCG, a member of the Coalition as the PI with input from a Coalition Committee. This led to an ongoing Project in Cobb County called “Sources of Strength” to change norms among high school students regarding help seeking. The fiscal agent was SPAN Ga who has had a yearly line item in the state budget via DHR for suicide prevention.

Another project was the Emergency Dept Project funded by the state. The goal of the project was to do an ED survey to determine needs for increased knowledge in ED's re suicide prevention. There was substantial input from Coalition members in this Project. The fiscal agent was CVIOG and Sally VS, a Coalition member, as the PI.

The 2nd Stakeholders meeting held at Callaway Gardens for an overnight meetings, was funded jointly by the state and CDC with CVIOG as the fiscal agent. The PI was SVS, however the planning Committee members were Coalition members. The topic was looking at different models of governance to implement the State Suicide Prevention Plan. The meeting underscored the need for development of local coalitions

SVS became the PI under the UGA Extension Service to facilitate local Coalition Development. There are 4 named local coalitions currently, with the plan for 3 new coalitions next year. Coalition members participated in some of the local coalition meetings.

SPANGA has developed several Projects with state money since they have a line item in the state budget. These include the expanding and networking SOS groups, GSPIN, a statewide broadcast network and a strategy booklet. The coalition has had substantial input into the latter Project, the Strategy booklet.

Another recent project was the College Suicide Prevention Conference attended by 20 colleges, held at UGA, and funded by the state with Emory as the fiscal agent. This project had substantial input into planning by the Coalition.

Recently grants were approved by the state for 2 other conferences: another college conference in Feb. and the third Stakeholders conference in Dec. Both will be funded by the state. The Stakeholders meetings will have the UGA School of Public Health as the fiscal agent. Both conferences will have substantial planning by the Coalition.

This past fall coalition members provided significant assistance to the state in their bid for a youth suicide prevention grant, a GLS Grant. If this grant is awarded the Coalition has agreed to serve in an advisory capacity to this grant.

Recently the Interfaith Health Program of Emory University has requested input from Coalition members on planning how to facilitate suicide prevention within the faith community. Members have attended several meetings to in initiate this activity.

A recent bid for another Compassion Capital Grant was approved by the Coalition this spring. This led the Coalition to work on this retreat to review its structure in view of its expanding activities.