



January 13, 2020

Honorable Eli Bebout
Honorable Bob Nicholas
Joint Appropriations Committee
Capitol Building, E201
Cheyenne, WY 82002

Re: Department of Health-Suicide Hotline (Letter #16)

Dear Chairman Bebout, Chairman Nicholas and members of the JAC,

Currently the Department of Health leads Wyoming's efforts for suicide prevention with a \$2 million allocation administered by the counties. While there is a national suicide prevention hotline, Wyoming does not have a locally-based resource, moreover, the national suicide prevention hotline reportedly is a poor substitute. For BFY2021 the Department of Health requested \$1,035,571 in funding to establish a state-based suicide prevention hotline to support our residents and help address the high rate of suicide in Wyoming. Over the last month, I have received additional details on how to establish and operate a state hotline. As a result of this knowledge, I recommend \$400,000 of on-going general funds to stand up a local program within Agency 048 Department of Health, Unit 0539 Injury & Chronic Disease Prevention, Object 0901 Professional Services. I have it on good authority this refined figure more accurately represents the actual costs of a program designed and operated here in Wyoming.

I continue to recognize the need to support individuals in Wyoming with suicidal ideation. Wyoming fares poorly in national measures of this epidemic, and a considered effort on our part would be well received. The citizens of our state will benefit from the Department of Health exception request to establish a suicide hotline.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mark Gordon", is written over the word "Sincerely,".

Mark Gordon
Governor