

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### ***Hundreds Gather for Riverside County's 3rd Annual Suicide Prevention Coalition Conference***

*Event Focused on Youth Suicide Crisis Response and Community Collaboration*

**RIVERSIDE, CA (October 10, 2024)** – Nearly 400 first responders, educators, health professionals and community leaders gathered at the 3rd Annual Riverside County Suicide Prevention Coalition Conference on Oct. 3.

The daylong event at the Riverside Convention Center served as a platform to address youth suicide prevention and equip professionals with the tools and resources needed to respond effectively to behavioral health crises.

“This conference underscored a critical public health challenge. Suicide is an issue that affects us all,” said Riverside County Board of Supervisors Chairman Chuck Washington. “By coming together, we provided first responders and educators the tools they need to save lives and opened doors for broader community collaboration.”

First responders, educators and healthcare professionals play a crucial role in the fight against suicide. The conference equipped attendees with tools to address behavioral health crises compassionately, while also emphasizing the importance of their own mental wellness and resilience.

Attendees engaged in sessions designed to strengthen suicide prevention efforts across the county, exploring themes around crisis response, collaboration and emotional wellness for professionals who are the first point of contact for individuals in crisis. The conference highlighted the need for proactive community engagement and shared best practices to improve outcomes in behavioral health support.

Public health initiatives aimed at reducing the stigma surrounding youth behavioral health and increasing access to care were central to the conference’s message. The gathering formed part of a broader effort to create a safer and healthier community by addressing the unique challenges of youth behavioral health and providing timely, compassionate intervention.

“We all have a role to play in preventing suicide,” said Riverside County Public Health Officer Dr. Geoffrey Leung. “By joining the coalition, community members can make a real difference in saving lives and building a support network for those in need.”

Community members are invited to join the Riverside County Suicide Prevention Coalition to support the ongoing efforts to reduce suicide rates and improve behavioral health outcomes across the region.

For more information or to join the coalition, visit [www.rivcospc.org](http://www.rivcospc.org).

For data and information about suicide in Riverside County, visit [www.RUHealth.org](http://www.RUHealth.org).

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### **About Riverside University Health System**

*Riverside University Health System (RUHS) includes a 439-bed Medical Center in Moreno Valley, Calif., 14 Federally Qualified Community Health Centers, and the departments of Public and Behavioral Health. RUHS is Riverside County's safety net provider, offering high-quality, patient-centered care. With more than 8,000 staff members and over 125 years of experience, RUHS continues its commitment to and legacy of delivering exceptional, compassionate care with a focus on public health, behavioral health, community wellness, and medical education. Visit [www.ruhealth.org](http://www.ruhealth.org) to learn more.*