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PRESENTATION ON RESOLUTIONS
RECOMMENDED BY THE LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION'S
SUBCOMMITTEE TO STUDY SUICIDE PREVENTION

A PRESENTATION TO
THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

BY

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LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL BUREAU

MARCH 24, 2003

MADAME CHAIR AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS, I AM DON WILLIAMS, CHIEF PRINCIPAL RESEARCH ANALYST WITH THE LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL BUREAU. AS YOU KNOW, AS AN LCB EMPLOYEE, I CAN NOT TAKE A POSITION EITHER IN SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION TO LEGISLATION, BUT I CAN PROVIDE YOU WITH INFORMATION. I AM APPEARING HERE THIS AFTERNOON AT THE REQUEST OF SENATOR ANN O'CONNELL, WHO CHAIRED THE LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION'S SUBCOMMITTEE TO STUDY SUICIDE PREVENTION DURING THE 2001 THROUGH 2002 INTERIM. THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE INTERIM SUBCOMMITTEE TO STUDY SUICIDE PREVENTION,

ASSEMBLY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
DATE: 03/24 ROOM: 3/38 EXHIBIT F1-5
SUBMITTED BY: Don Williams

INCLUDED SENATORS RANDOLPH TOWNSEND, MARK AMODEI, VALERIE WIENER AND FOUR ASSEMBLY MEMBERS—ASSEMBLYMAN DAVID PARKS, ASSEMBLYWOMAN SHEILA LESLIE, AND FORMER ASSEMBLY MEMBERS DAVID HUMKE AND DEBBIE SMITH. I SERVED AS THE PRIMARY STAFF PERSON ON THE STUDY. THE SUBCOMMITTEE'S REPORT—LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL BUREAU BULLETIN NO. 03-11, *STUDY OF SUICIDE PREVENTION*—HAS BEEN DISTRIBUTED TO YOU.

FOR MANY YEARS, NEVADA HAS CONSISTENTLY RANKED FIRST AMONG THE 50 STATES IN THE RATE OF SUICIDE. FROM 1995 THROUGH 2000, THE FEDERAL CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL (CDC) REPORTED THAT NEVADA HAD A SUICIDE RATE OF 22.9 PER 100,000 POPULATION AS COMPARED WITH THE NATIONAL AVERAGE OF 11.3—OVER TWICE THE NATIONAL AVERAGE. FOR THE FIRST TIME IN DECADES, NEVADA'S SUICIDE RATE WAS EXCEEDED BY ONE OTHER STATE—ALASKA—IN THE MOST RECENT RANKINGS THAT WERE RELEASED LATE LAST YEAR. NEVADA'S RATE IS HIGH AMONG ALL AGE GROUPS AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC POPULATIONS IN THE STATE, INCLUDING YOUTH, ELDERLY MEN, NATIVE AMERICANS, AND RESIDENTS OF RURAL COMMUNITIES. THIS SAME RESEARCH CONSISTENTLY HAS FOUND THAT THE VAST MAJORITY OF SUICIDE VICTIMS ARE RESIDENTS OF NEVADA AND NOT TOURISTS.

SUICIDE IS THE FIFTH LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH IN NEVADA. THERE ARE TWICE AS MANY SUICIDES AS HOMICIDES IN THE STATE. DURING OUR INTERIM STUDY, WE LEARNED THAT NEVADA IS THE ONLY STATE WHERE THERE ARE CONSISTENTLY MORE DEATHS CAUSED BY SUICIDE THAN DEATHS IN MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENTS.

THE SUBCOMMITTEE ADOPTED 19 RECOMMENDATIONS, INCLUDING FOUR BILL DRAFT REQUESTS (BDRS), FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE 2003 LEGISLATURE. THE RECOMMENDATIONS ADDRESS THE FOLLOWING MAJOR TOPICS:

- DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING A NEVADA STATE SUICIDE PREVENTION PLAN AND PROGRAM;
- IMPROVING LOCAL SUICIDE PREVENTION SERVICES;
- ENHANCING SUICIDE PREVENTION EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR KEY GATEKEEPERS;
- ADDRESSING SUICIDE PREVENTION IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS;
- INCREASING STATE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES; AND
- RECOGNIZING THE RELATIONSHIP OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND OTHER CO-OCCURRING DISORDERS TO SUICIDE.

THE INTERIM SUBCOMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS INCORPORATE GOALS FROM THE UNITED STATES SURGEON GENERAL'S 2001 REPORT, *NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION: GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR ACTION*. THE SUBCOMMITTEE'S POSITION IS THAT NEVADA'S STATE PLAN SHOULD FOCUS ON THE SURGEON GENERAL'S GOALS RELATING TO PUBLIC AWARENESS, BUILDING COMMUNITY NETWORKS, AND IMPLEMENTING SUICIDE PREVENTION TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT, HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS, SCHOOL EMPLOYEES, AND OTHERS WHO ARE THE FIRST CONTACTS WITH INDIVIDUALS AT RISK OF SUICIDE.

SENATE BILL 49, WHICH CREATES A STATEWIDE SUICIDE PREVENTION PROGRAM, IS THE PRIMARY LEGISLATION RECOMMENDED BY THE INTERIM SUBCOMMITTEE. IN PROPOSING SENATE BILL 49, THE SUICIDE PREVENTION SUBCOMMITTEE RECOGNIZED THE NEED FOR A COMPREHENSIVE AND STATEWIDE APPROACH TO CERTAINLY ONE OF THE STATE'S MOST SERIOUS HEALTH PROBLEMS. BOTH EXPERTS AND CITIZENS HAVE RECOMMENDED THAT NEVADA DEVELOP A STATE SUICIDE PREVENTION PROGRAM AND APPOINT PERSONNEL TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT THE PLAN. SENATE BILL 49 WAS FAVORABLY REPORTED OUT OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RESOURCES AND FACILITIES AND IS NOW IN THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE.

BECAUSE THE SUBCOMMITTEE DISCOVERED THAT THERE IS A SERIOUS LACK OF A COORDINATED AND ACCREDITED SUICIDE PREVENTION PROGRAM IN THE LAS VEGAS AREA, MANY OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS FOCUS ON DEVELOPING AND IMPROVING SUICIDE PREVENTION PROGRAMS IN CLARK COUNTY. ON TODAY'S AGENDA, YOU WILL HEAR THREE RESOLUTIONS RELATING TO IMPROVING SERVICES IN CLARK COUNTY AND/OR THE OTHER COUNTIES IN THE STATE. THEY ARE SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTIONS 3, 4, AND 5.

MADAME CHAIR, I WILL NOW PRESENT BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE THREE RESOLUTIONS. AND THEN I WOULD BE PLEASED TO ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS. THANK YOU.

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