

New Hampshire is fortunate to have the combined factors of a public health minded Office of Chief Medical Examiner and a small state. This allows for the use of surveillance data to identify specific at-risk populations and to target interventions to those populations.

This follows recommendations from The National Strategy for Suicide Prevention. Jerry Reed, Director of the Suicide Prevention Resource Center states, *“The National Strategy offers a wonderful menu of options, but it’s up to state and local groups to prioritize what will work best and reach those most at risk in their communities. And the way to figure out what are the best options is simple: Start with your data. Only by looking at data on suicide risk (both quantitative and qualitative) in your community can you focus on the areas of greatest need and effectively pursue programs that reduce suicidal behaviors and save lives.”*

The data on some suicides over the past several years identified a common event. It had been noted that there were some suicides that occurred within a short period of time after being arrested for substance-related issues, most commonly a DWI. Members of the Bureau of Behavioral Health, the Bureau of Drug and Alcohol Services and the National Alliance for Mental Illness met to discuss this and brainstorm interventions.

The idea of a bookmark to be given to family members/friends who come to the police station to pick up the individual recently arrested was born.

The bookmark is brightly colored to get attention, and be easy to find days, or weeks, later. It has the warning signs of suicide listed on one side. The other side lists both the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline number and 211 for resources that may be needed, outside of suicide prevention, as a result of the arrest.

The Nashua police department agreed to be part of a “pilot project” for this intervention. Feedback is still being evaluated. Other groups have expressed interest in this project.

