

Fulton County Suicide Prevention Coalition

Yearly Data Review: 2023



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Introduction

In the ongoing pursuit of mental health and community well-being, the significance of suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention cannot be overstated. As we delve into the 2023 data review for Fulton County, it is imperative to acknowledge the gravity of these efforts and the role that accurate and timely data plays in shaping effective strategies.

Suicide prevention is a collective responsibility that extends across various sectors of society. Beyond the individual impact on lives lost, suicide carries profound social, economic, and public health ramifications. Recognizing this, communities across the United States are actively engaged in initiatives aimed at preventing, intervening in, and responding to suicide crises.

The importance of collecting accurate and timely data cannot be emphasized enough in the realm of suicide prevention. To design targeted interventions and allocate resources effectively, we must rely on comprehensive data that reflects the nuanced realities of each community. This information not only informs immediate response efforts but also guides the development of long-term strategies to address the root causes of suicide.

As we present the 2023 data review for Fulton County, our commitment is twofold: to provide a detailed understanding of the local landscape concerning suicide and to underscore the critical role that data plays in shaping the narrative and outcomes of suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention efforts. Through this report, we aim to contribute to a data-driven approach that fosters resilience, promotes mental health, and saves lives within our community.

Data Context

To grasp the nuanced intricacies of the suicide data presented in this report, it is imperative to contextualize the information within the unique landscape of Fulton County. Ranking as the 51st largest county among Pennsylvania's 67 counties, Fulton County encompasses 437.6 square miles of land, painting a portrait of a region characterized by expansive geography (United States Census Bureau, n.d.). Despite its size, Fulton County stands as the 4th least populated county in Pennsylvania, with a 2022 population of 14,533 individuals (United States Census Bureau, n.d.).

Economic indicators reveal a noteworthy aspect of the county's profile. The median household income in Fulton County is \$63,153, falling notably below both the national median household income and the median household income in Pennsylvania by approximately \$11,500 and \$10,000, respectively (Guzman & Kollar, 2023). Paradoxically, despite the lower median income, Fulton County boasts a poverty rate of 10.7%, marginally lower than Pennsylvania's rate by 1.1% (United States Census Bureau, n.d.).

In the employment landscape, Fulton County exhibits a 57% employment rate, slightly trailing Pennsylvania by 3.1%. Residents of Fulton County endure an average commute of 32 minutes to work, contributing to the overall socio-economic context of the region (United States Census Bureau, n.d.).

Turning our focus to health-related factors, Fulton County's population includes an 18% disabled demographic, surpassing the state average of 14.6% (United States Census Bureau, n.d.). Additionally, 5.4% of Fulton County residents lack health insurance, and the county has only 1.4 hospital beds per 1,000 people, in stark contrast to Pennsylvania's 2.3 beds per 1,000 people (Pennsylvania Department of Health).

In summary, Fulton County emerges as a small, geographically expansive county with a population that falls slightly below state and national averages across various socioeconomic and health metrics. This contextual understanding sets the stage for a more nuanced interpretation of the suicide data as we explore the interplay between these factors and the overall well-being of the community.

Crisis Data

This section examines the crisis data reported by TrueNorth Wellness Services for the years 2022 and 2023, offering a valuable glimpse into the mental health landscape experienced by the residents of Fulton County during this period. It is crucial to acknowledge that the provided data, while insightful, does not capture the entirety of crisis interventions sought by the county's residents. Notably, Keystone Health Crisis Intervention Services reported 61 contacts with individuals residing in Fulton County during the year 2023 alone.

Table One provides a comprehensive overview of the contacts reported by TrueNorth Wellness Services in 2023, detailing the distribution by month and age range. Notably, January and June emerged as the peak periods, each registering 14 contacts, while September exhibited lower activity with only three reported contacts.

A notable trend surfaces as we delve into the age-specific breakdown. The 18-59 age category dominates the landscape, constituting 54% of all contacts made in 2023. This data underscores a focal demographic in the utilization of TrueNorth Wellness Services, shedding light on the specific age groups seeking support during the observed period.

Table 1 Number of contacts by month 2023

Age Range 2023	Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23	Apr 23	May 23	Jun 23	Jul 23	Aug 23	Sep 23	Oct 23	Nov 23	Dec 23	2023 total
Anonymo us	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ages <6	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Ages 06-13	1	4	0	3	1	0	2	1	1	6	0	2	21
Ages 14-17	1	1	4	4	3	2	2	0	0	2	2	2	23
Ages 18 -59	12	6	7	1	5	9	6	8	2	4	4	5	69
Ages 60+	0	2	1	1	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	2	12
Total:	14	13	12	12	12	14	10	9	3	12	6	11	128

Table 2 offers a comprehensive breakdown of individuals who sought assistance from TrueNorth Wellness Services, focusing on those who presented suicidal ideation as their primary concern. Notably, October stands out as the peak, with eight reported contacts expressing thoughts of suicide, whereas July recorded the lowest activity, with only one individual reporting similar concerns. Delving into the age-specific distribution, the 18-59 age category emerges prominently, constituting the highest percentage of contacts reporting suicidal ideation, accounting for 59% of the total.

Table 2. Number of individuals stating suicidal ideation as their presenting problem

Suicidal 2023	Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23	Apr 23	May 23	Jun 23	Jul 23	Aug 23	Sep 23	Oct 23	Nov 23	Dec 23	2023 total
Anonym ous	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ages <6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ages 6-13	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	0	0	5
Ages 14-17	0	1	2	3	3	1	0	0	0	1	2	2	11
Ages 18-59	5	3	2	1	1	3	1	5	2	4	1	2	27
Ages 60+	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Total:	5	5	5	5	5	4	1	5	3	8	3	4	46

Figure 1 illustrates a comparative analysis of reported contacts by TrueNorth Wellness in the years 2022 and 2023, presenting a monthly breakdown. Notably, the overall trend indicates a higher number of contacts in 2022, surpassing 2023 by 12 cases.

Despite this general decline, specific months in 2023 witnessed an increased number of reported cases compared to the same period in 2022. These months include January, April, May, October, and December. Examining the seasonal distribution, Winter in 2023 emerged with the highest number of contacts at 38, closely followed by Spring with 36 contacts. In contrast, the pattern in 2022 showcased Spring as the peak season with 43 contacts, followed by Summer with 41.

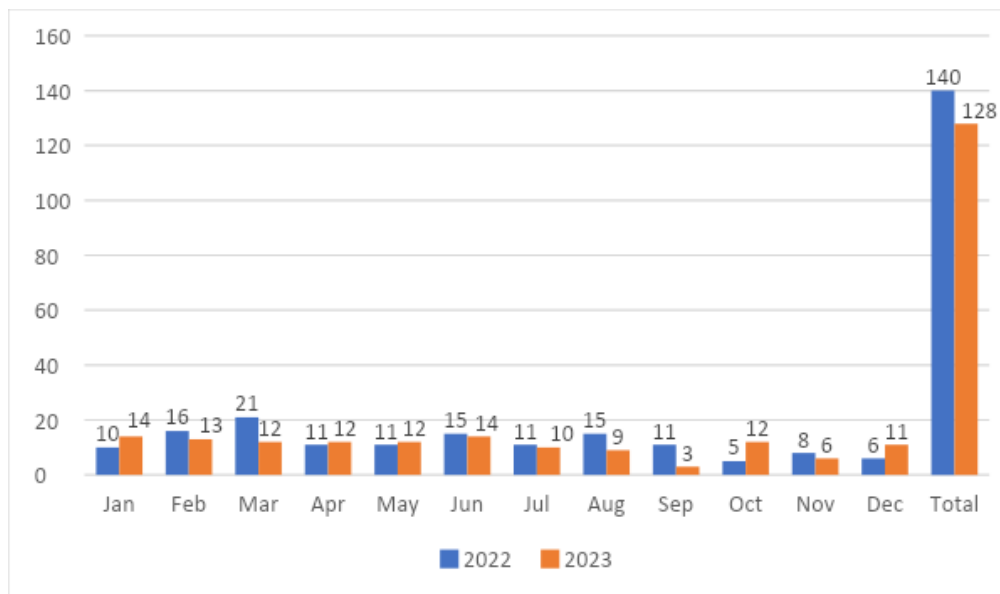


Figure 1. Total Contacts by Month 2022 & 2023

Figure 2 illustrates a comparative analysis of the instances where individuals reported suicidal ideation as their presenting issue to TrueNorth Wellness in the years 2022 and 2023. Notably, there was a significant 25.3% reduction from 2022 to 2023. Despite 2022 having a higher overall incidence of suicidal ideation reports, the months of October and December witnessed more cases in 2023 than in the corresponding period of 2022.

Examining the seasonal distribution in 2023 reveals that Fall had the highest number of reported suicidal ideation cases, followed by Spring, Summer, and Winter. This pattern contrasts with 2022, where Spring recorded the highest number of reports, followed by Summer, Winter, and then Fall.

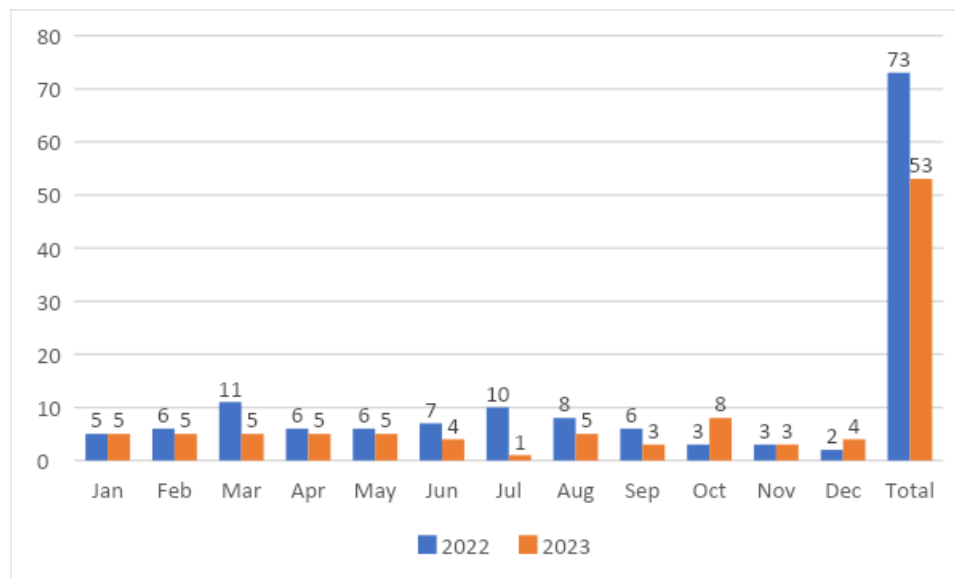


Figure 2. Contacts reporting Suicidal Ideation as Presenting Problem in 2022&2023

Suicide Data

This section delves into the data provided by the Fulton County Coroner's Office and suicide death data collected from other sources. It is crucial to acknowledge that the suicide deaths documented by the Fulton County Coroner's office pertain exclusively to incidents transpiring within Fulton County. Consequently, the reported statistics on suicide deaths do not encompass cases involving Fulton County residents who passed away by suicide in a different county. This distinction is paramount for a comprehensive understanding of the scope and geographic specificity of the reported data.

Table 3 comprehensively presents suicide data spanning from 2023 to 2018, detailing total deaths, gender distribution, age ranges, methods, and veteran status. The data for 2023 and 2022 is directly sourced from the Fulton County Coroner's Office, while information for 2021 to 2018 is derived from the Pennsylvania Department of Health Data Enterprise Data Dissemination Informatics Exchange. Notably, veteran status is unavailable for the years 2021 to 2018. The calculation of the crude suicide rate for all reported years involved was done utilizing the average population reported by the United States Census Bureau for 2018-2023, amounting to 14,532 people.

Analyzing the gender breakdown over the past six years reveals a near-equitable distribution, with only a marginal difference of one additional male death. The years 2022 and 2019 stand out, with 2022 witnessing four male deaths and one female, and in 2019, both reported suicides were female.

Examining age breakdowns for suicide cases in Fulton County highlights the 30-39 age category with the highest number of deaths at four, followed by 40-49, 50-59, and 60+, each accounting for three deaths. This suggests that individuals over the age of 30 constitute the most at-risk population in Fulton County. It's noteworthy that in 2023, deaths occurred in the middle age range of 30-49, and there appears to be a pattern of deaths occurring in the 50+ population every other year over the past six years.

The predominant method of suicide in Fulton County over the past six years has been self-inflicted gunshot wounds, accounting for 12 out of 15 reported deaths. Only three deaths were attributed to other methods. This underscores the significance of understanding both demographic and methodological aspects to formulate effective suicide prevention strategies within the community.

Table 3. Suicide data for 2023-2018

Year	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
Number of deaths	2	5	2	3	2	1
Crude Suicide Rate (#deaths/100,000 people)	13.8	34.4	13.8	20.6	13.8	6.9
Sex						
Male	1	4	1	1	0	1
Female	1	1	1	2	2	0
Age range						
18 and below	0	0	0	0	0	0
19-29	0	0	0	1	1	0

30-39	1	2	1	0	0	0
40-49	1	0	1	0	1	0
50-59	0	2	0	1	0	0
60+	0	1	0	1	0	1
Method						
Self-inflicted gunshot wound	2	5	1	2	1	1
Other	0	0	1	1	1	0
Veteran Status						
Non-Veteran	2	4				
Veteran	0	1				

Figure 3 delineates the crude suicide rates for each year spanning from 2013 to 2023, comparing Fulton County, Pennsylvania, and the United States. This visual representation offers a clear insight into how Fulton County aligns with state and national averages. The calculation of crude suicide rates for Fulton County in Figure 3 mirrors the methodology employed in Table 3. Conversely, the crude suicide rates reported in Figure 3 for Pennsylvania and the United States were sourced from the Center for Disease Control's National Vital Statistics System, with the caveat that data for 2023 is currently unavailable.

Upon closer examination of the graph, it is crucial to emphasize the temporal trends in the State and National crude suicide rates. Until 2020, there was a steady increase, followed by a dip and subsequent resurgence. In contrast, Fulton County exhibits specific years marked by dramatic increases, deviating from the broader trend observed at the state and national levels.

A noteworthy observation is that Fulton County does not conform to the same trajectory as the State and National crude suicide rates. To prevent exceeding these rates, Fulton County must not surpass two suicides in any given year. This threshold has been met in six of the examined years, with Fulton County averaging 2.4 suicides annually. However, 2022 and 2017 stand out as extreme outliers, with five and four suicides, respectively. This data underscores the significance of understanding local variations and anomalies in suicide rates to inform targeted prevention efforts within Fulton County.

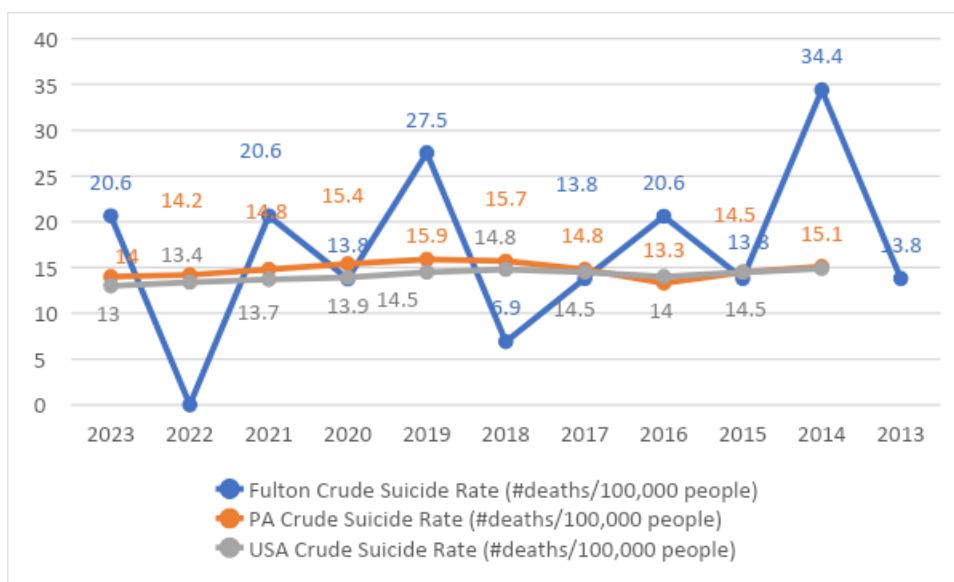


Figure 3. Crude Suicide Rate for Fulton County, PA, and the USA for 2013-2023

Summary

In the ongoing commitment to mental health and community well-being, the importance of suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention cannot be overstated. As we delve into the 2023 data review for Fulton County, it becomes clear that accurate and timely data plays a pivotal role in shaping effective strategies for addressing mental health challenges.

Suicide prevention is a shared responsibility that extends across various sectors, given its profound impact on individuals and the broader community. Recognizing this, communities nationwide are actively involved in initiatives to prevent, intervene, and respond to suicide crises. Collecting accurate and timely data is critical in designing targeted interventions and allocating resources effectively, providing a comprehensive understanding of each community's unique dynamics.

In presenting the 2023 data review for Fulton County, our commitment is twofold: to offer a detailed understanding of the local suicide landscape and to underscore the crucial role of data in shaping effective prevention, intervention, and postvention efforts. The report aims to contribute to a data-driven approach that promotes resilience and mental health and ultimately saves lives within our community.

Despite its vast geography, Fulton County stands as the 4th least populated county in Pennsylvania. Economic indicators reveal a lower median household income yet a paradoxical poverty rate lower than the state average. These contextual factors set the stage for a nuanced interpretation of the suicide data and its correlation with the overall well-being of the community.

The crisis data reported by TrueNorth Wellness Services provides insight into the mental health landscape in 2022 and 2023. Notably, the 18-59 age category dominates the utilization of services, highlighting a specific demographic seeking support. The report also reveals fluctuations in reported contacts, with certain months and seasons experiencing higher activity.

Data from the Fulton County Coroner's Office and other sources shed light on suicide deaths from 2023 to 2018. The analysis underscores demographic and methodological aspects, revealing patterns and predominant factors contributing to suicide cases. Understanding these factors is crucial for formulating effective prevention strategies within the community.

Figure 3 illustrates crude suicide rates from 2013 to 2023, comparing Fulton County with Pennsylvania and the United States. The graph highlights specific years of dramatic increases in Fulton County, deviating from the broader state and national trends. This emphasizes the importance of local variations in suicide rates, guiding targeted prevention efforts.

In conclusion, this comprehensive report provides a detailed analysis of mental health data in Fulton County. The nuanced understanding of demographics, service utilization, and suicide trends enables the community to tailor effective strategies for suicide prevention and overall mental well-being.

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