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**NEWS
RELEASE**

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Department of Public Health and Community Partners Raise Mental Health Awareness

Health Officials Urge Residents to Prioritize Mental Health

El Paso, Texas – In recognition of Suicide Prevention Awareness Month, the City of El Paso Department of Public Health (DPH) and other mental healthcare organizations are partnering with the local National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) to bring awareness to mental health at the free NAMIWalks El Paso 2023 event from **8 a.m. to noon on Saturday, October 14 at Ascarate Park, 6900 Delta Dr.**

NAMIWalks El Paso is the largest mental health awareness event nationwide and it's happening here in our community. This event brings hope, inspiration, support and solidarity for all participants.

The event is free and open to the public. To register for the NAMIWalks El Paso 2023, visit www.namiwalks.org/elpaso.

Prior to the walk, the City alongside NAMI will host the **Suicide Prevention Awareness Month Vigil at 7 p.m. Thursday, September 21, at San Jacinto Plaza.** The vigil is open to the public and will commemorate the lives lost due to suicide.

"We are grateful to have the support of the City's Department of Public Health and our community partners in bringing awareness," says Isidro Torres, Executive Director of NAMI El Paso. "We cannot do this work alone and it is vital we have these important conversations."

According to the Center for Disease Control & Prevention, there was a 2.6% increase in suicide deaths in 2022, with an estimated increase from 48,183 deaths in 2021 to 49,449 deaths in 2022.

In El Paso, the El Paso County Office of the Medical Examiner (OME) recorded 108 deaths by suicide in 2022, an increase of 19% from the previous year (91). As of July 15, 2023, the El Paso OME has recorded 59 deaths by suicide.

"Events such as this one, bring families together and emphasizes the importance of mental health in the overall well-being of each individual," said City-County Health Authority Dr. Hector Ocaranza. "We must continue to address this very real problem of mental health illness through collaboration between organizations, but most importantly helping each other".

City Public Health officials urge residents to prioritize their mental well-being through mental health screenings at the time of their regular checkups or at any time and seek help as early as possible. Residents in need of support, are encouraged to call the crisis hotline at 9-8-8.

For additional assistance or more information please call (915) 212-6757, or dial 2-1-1, or visit epstrong.org under [Mental Health Resources](#). **#TommorowNeedsYou**

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Promoting Transparent & Consistent Communication
Among All Members of the Community

Media contact: Soraya Ayub Palacios
Strategic Communications Office
(915) 212-1040 or (915) 781-4386