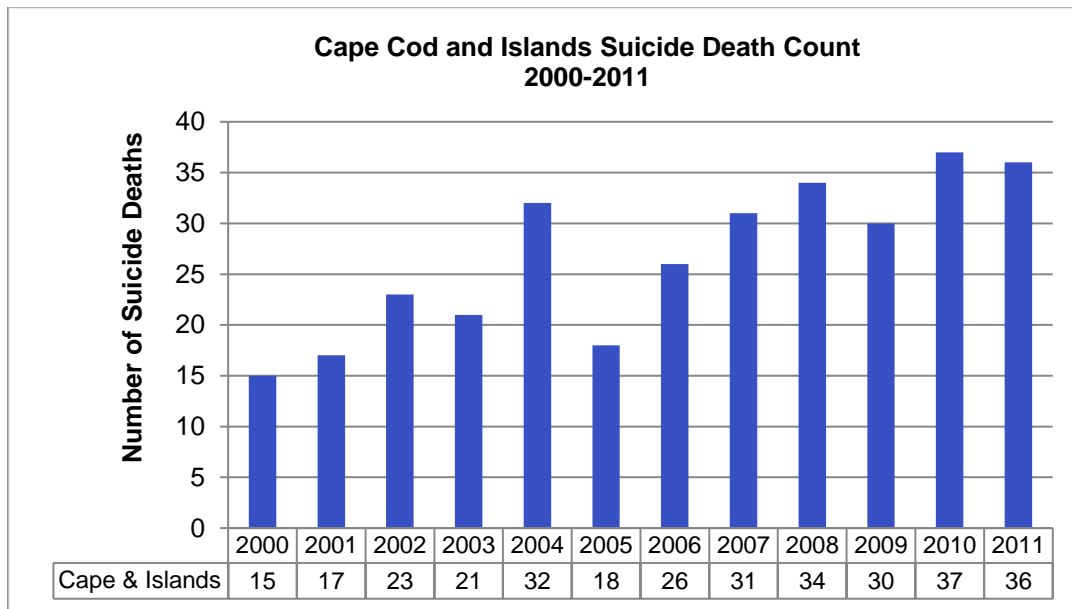




This fact sheet summarizes data on suicide deaths specific to residents of Cape Cod (Barnstable County), Martha’s Vineyard (Dukes County) and Nantucket during the period 2000 to 2011.¹

320 residents of Cape Cod & the Islands died by suicide from 2000 to 2011

- The 320 deaths comprised 288 residents of Cape Cod, 10 residents of Martha’s Vineyard, and 11 residents of Nantucket.
- In 2011 alone, there were 36 deaths, which is significant as reflected by the suicide death rate per 100,000 persons.
- Regardless of statistics, each suicide is traumatic with far-reaching consequences for family, friends, and even strangers.²



The suicide death rate for Cape Cod & the Islands is 1.4 times the Massachusetts rate

- The 2011 age adjusted suicide death rate for Cape Cod and the Islands is 12.1 per 100,000 persons contrasted to 8.7 per 100,000 for Massachusetts.³
- The age adjusted suicide death rate for Cape Cod and the Islands has doubled between 2000 to 2011 from 6.2 per 100,000 persons to 12.1 per 100,000 persons.

The Cape Cod & the Islands ratio of suicide deaths is 5 male to 1 female

- This ratio is much higher than Massachusetts trends of 3 male to 1 female. Notably, for all age groups age 74 and under, females are more likely to attempt suicide than are males.



The suicide death rate for Cape Cod & the Islands middle-aged men is concerning

- For persons age 35 to 44 years in the region, the seven-year 2005 to 2011 suicide death rate was 24.4 per 100,000. This rate is comparable to that of the Massachusetts 2011 rate in the same age group. Note however, that male suicides outnumber female suicides by a factor of 3 to 1 in this age group.
- For persons age 45 to 54 years in the region, the seven-year 2005 to 2011 suicide death rate was 21.0 per 100,000. While this rate is significantly less than the Massachusetts 2011 rate of 31.0 per 100,000 for the same age group, middle-aged men continue to be at disproportionate risk for suicide. Additionally, in the Cape and Islands male suicides continue to outnumber female suicides by a factor of nearly 4 to 1 in this age group.

The suicide death rate for Cape Cod & the Islands young people is more than twice the state rate

- Twenty young people from the region age 15 to 24 years took his or her life from 2005 to 2011, a seven-year suicide death rate of 11.2 per 100,000 persons compared with 5.4 per 100,000 for Massachusetts as a whole during the period 2005 to 2009.⁴
- Besides the suicide death rate of young people, there is concern for the high rate of thoughts about suicide and attempting suicide among the 15 to 19 years age group. According to a 2011 statewide survey of high school students:⁵
 - 13% of students had thoughts of suicide and 7% attempted suicide in the past year.
 - Lesbian, gay, bisexual (LGB) students – 7% of responding students – are particularly at risk; 34% had attempted suicide in the past year.

Older adults are a population of concern

- Twenty-seven deaths of adults 65 years and over were determined to be suicide from 2005 to 2011.
- The region's seven-year 2005 to 2011 suicide death rate for this age group was similar to the Massachusetts rate of 6.7 per 100,000 persons, and lower than the national rate.
- According to national statistics, men age 45 to 64 years and over are of highest concern for suicide risk.

2011 Suicides by Barnstable, Dukes, and Nantucket County Residents (anywhere in MA)

- Thirty-two deaths by suicide (N = 32) occurred among Cape Cod (Barnstable County) residents in 2011. Males (n = 21) died at twice the rate of females (n = 11). Thirty-one of the deceased were white, non-Hispanic.
- In 2011 Martha's Vineyard (Dukes County) and Nantucket recorded 3 (1 Male, 2 Female) and 1 (1 Male) deaths by suicide, respectively.



2009 - 2011 Suicides—Barnstable County Residents (anywhere in MA)

- Specific data for Cape Cod are presented next.

| Suicides of Barnstable County Residents, MA Occurrent, 2009-2011 | | | | |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------------------|
| | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | Total 2009-2011 |
| | N | N | N | N |
| Total | 26 | 35 | 32 | 93 |
| AGE | | | | |
| 0-14 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 15-24 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 8 |
| 25-34 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 7 |
| 35-44 | 7 | 9 | 9 | 25 |
| 45-54 | 10 | 11 | 6 | 27 |
| 55-64 | 3 | 7 | 9 | 19 |
| 65+ | 1 | 5 | 1 | 7 |
| SEX | | | | |
| Male | 23 | 27 | 21 | 71 |
| Female | 3 | 8 | 11 | 22 |
| RACE/ETHNICITY | | | | |
| White, NH | 29 | 35 | 31 | 95 |
| Black, NH | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Asian | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Hispanic | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Other/Unknown | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| WEAPON | | | | |
| Hanging | 12 | 15 | 18 | 45 |
| Firearm | 9 | 10 | 3 | 22 |
| Poisoning | 5 | 7 | 9 | 21 |
| Other | 0 | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| TOWN OF RESIDENCE | | | | |
| Barnstable | 12 | 6 | 8 | 26 |
| Bourne | 0 | 5 | 3 | 8 |
| Brewster | 1 | 0 | 2 | 3 |
| Chatham | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| Dennis | 1 | 1 | 2 | 4 |
| Eastham | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Falmouth | 3 | 8 | 3 | 14 |
| Harwich | 0 | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| Mashpee | 1 | 2 | 0 | 3 |
| Orleans | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Provincetown | 0 | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Sandwich | 3 | 3 | 3 | 9 |
| Truro | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Wellfleet | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Yarmouth | 4 | 3 | 6 | 13 |
| Total | 26 | 35 | 32 | 93 |
| Year | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | Total 2009-2011 |



General Facts About Suicide Deaths

- In 2011, suicide was the 10th leading cause of death in the United States and Massachusetts and the third leading cause of death for adolescents and young adults (ages 15-24).⁶
- Males are four times as likely to die by suicide as females, but females are three times as likely to attempt suicide.
- Suicide occurs across ethnic, economic, social and age boundaries.
- Factors associated with a suicide death are many and complex and differ for each person. According to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health report *Violent Deaths in Massachusetts 2011*:
 - 51% who died by suicide had a current mental health problem and 37% were receiving treatment for a mental illness at the time of death
 - 27% were experiencing an alcohol or other substance abuse problem
 - 23% were experiencing an intimate partner problem
 - 16% had a job problem
 - 35% left a suicide note
- Suicide is preventable; most suicidal people give warning signals of their suicidal intentions.

Cape Cod and Islands Behavioral Health Hotlines and Prevention Activities

- For immediate assistance if you or someone you know is in crisis, please call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at **1-800-273-8255** or call the Department of Mental Health Cape & Islands Crisis Hotline at **1-800-322-1356**
- A number of Cape Cod and the Islands organizations and coalitions are engaged in suicide prevention activities, including raising awareness about mental health and substance abuse concerns, trainings for professionals and others to learn how to talk with someone who may be at risk for suicide and to refer them for help, and building healthy and resilient communities.

For more information, contact Jessica McHugh, Project Assistant at the Barnstable County Department of Human Services and Co-chair of the Cape and Islands Suicide Prevention Coalition at jmchugh@barnstablecounty.org or 508-375-6630 or 508-362-5885 (TTY)

Sources of Information

Data and other information in this fact sheet are from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the American Association of Suicidology, and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH). For more information, contact Vaira Harik, Senior Project Manager, Barnstable County Department of Human Services, vharik@barnstablecounty.org or 508-375-6629 or 508-362-5885 (TTY)

¹ The most recent data released by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health are for 2011. This fact sheet will be updated following official release of 2012 data.

² Quote from a co-chair of the Suicide Prevention Coalition of Cape Cod & Islands during a media interview.

³ The suicide death rate is reported as the number of occurrences per 100,000 persons so we can compare a region or population group to itself over time and to others. The suicide death rate is also age adjusted using a statistical technique to take into consideration differences in age distribution. Cape & Islands data are reported for 2011, Massachusetts-wide data are reported for 2010 (source: *MDPH Injury Surveillance Program (Spring 2014) Suicides and Self-Inflicted Injuries in Massachusetts: Data Summary*).

⁴ The multi-year rates for the Cape and Islands reported here (2005-2011) do not directly compare to those available statewide (2005-2009) at the time of this writing. An update will be provided when the Massachusetts multi-year rates are updated through 2011 for this datum. However, the Cape and Islands rate of teen suicide appears to remain twice that of the statewide rate.

⁵ The Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey is administered by MDPH and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education every two years in a sample of the state's high schools. www.doe.mass.edu/cnp/hprograms/yrebs/ The school districts of Nantucket, Martha's Vineyard and several Cape Cod towns administer a risk behavior survey to students in their schools.

⁶ Source: <http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/dph/research-epi/death-report-2011.pdf>