New York, New York (April 22, 2016) -- The data in the new CDC report demonstrates incremental increases of the U.S. suicide rate over a 15-year period, which accumulate to an overall increase in suicides of 24% from 1999 to 2014. It is unclear as to what may be contributing to this slow and steady rise in suicide rates, including to what degree more accurate reporting is a factor. However, these data underscore why suicide prevention must remain a national public health priority. While more is being done now than ever before to prevent suicides in the United States, greater efforts must occur to reverse this disturbing trend in a preventable cause of death.

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (800-273-TALK, or 8255) is allowing more people to get help from a service that has been shown to effectively reduce caller distress and suicidality. The Lifeline network is expected to answer more than 1.7 million calls this year and that number is climbing. suicidepreventionlifeline.org

“We are working with public and private leaders across the country to promote the implementation of evidence-based suicide prevention practices in our homes, schools, workplaces, and health care facilities,” said John Draper, Ph.D., President, Link2Health Solutions and Director, of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. “We must also continue to raise awareness about resources like those at the Lifeline, so that everyone at risk has access to help when, where and how they want it.”
The CDC data remind us that there is more we must all do to prevent suicide in our communities. However, it is important to be aware of data that indicates suicide prevention is effectively occurring daily, in ways that are rarely finding headlines. For every one person who tragically dies by suicide in the U.S., there are approximately 278 people who have moved past serious thoughts about killing themselves, and nearly 60 who have survived a suicide attempt, the overwhelming majority of whom will go on to live out their lives. These untold stories of hope and recovery are the stories of suicide prevention, stories which are informing the Lifeline and its national partners’ efforts to prevent more suicides every day.

We also know that reporting on suicide carries a great responsibility for the media. Research shows that the media may influence suicide rates by the way they describe suicides or trends in suicide. Interestingly, evidence suggests that when the media tells stories of people positively coping in suicidal moments, more suicides can be prevented. We urge all members of the media working on these stories to please see the national expert consensus best practices for reporting on suicide:

www.reportingonsuicide.org

About the Mental Health Association of New York City (MHA-NYC):

MHA-NYC is a non-profit organization that addresses mental health needs in New York City and across the nation. Through our three-part mission of service, advocacy and education, we identify unmet needs and develop culturally sensitive programs to improve the lives of individuals and families impacted by mental illness while promoting the importance of mental health. Our subsidiary, Link2HealthSolutions, is a leading innovator developing technology and communications infrastructure critical for supporting the emotional wellness of individuals and communities in need. Link2HealthSolutions administers the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and the Veterans Crisis Line. Together MHA-NYC and Link2Health Solutions provide high-quality services that reach more than one million people every year. www.mhaofnyc.org

To learn more about the MHA-NYC gala “The Many Faces of Mental Health” go to:
http://www.mhaofnyc.org/gala2016