Pediatric and Suicide Prevention Experts Partner to Create Blueprint for Preventing Youth Suicide

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- **Rising Youth Suicide Rates**: Suicide is the second leading cause of death among individuals aged 10-24 in the U.S., with rates of attempted suicide and suicidal thoughts rising, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Blueprint for Youth Suicide Prevention**: The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP), in collaboration with the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), created a comprehensive blueprint to help pediatric health clinicians and community members prevent youth suicide.
- **Focus on Health Equity**: The blueprint emphasizes the importance of addressing disparities in suicide rates among different cultural and ethnic groups and increasing research focused on these populations.
- **Key Recommendations**:
  - Increase access to mental health care and suicide prevention services.
  - Build a more diverse and robust mental health workforce.
  - Improve insurance coverage for mental and behavioral health services.
  - Restrict access to lethal means, such as firearms, to reduce suicide risk.
  - Foster healthy mental development from childhood through adolescence.
  - Promote partnerships between healthcare providers and community organizations to support at-risk youth.
- **Role of Pediatric Health Settings**: Pediatricians are encouraged to screen all patients aged 12 and older for mental health concerns and suicide risk. They are well-positioned to engage with families and provide early intervention.

- **Broader Community Involvement**: The blueprint advocates for involvement from schools, families, and community groups to create a supportive environment for youth mental health and suicide prevention.
- **Suicide Prevention Resources**: Additional support is provided through the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and other crisis support services.
- **Goal of the Blueprint**: The aim is to create a comprehensive approach that combines medical, community, and legislative actions to prevent youth suicide and support mental health across the U.S.

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