



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Oakland Family Services Counsels Families, Community on Teenage Suicide**

**WALLED LAKE, MI** - In recent light of the Charles Edwards teenage suicide bill becoming law, Oakland Family Services maintains its leadership position as an educator and support network both in and around Oakland County.

Suicide rates continue to increase in Michigan and in the United States as a whole. According to State statistics for children 5 to 14, suicide was the fifth leading cause of death. For ages 15 to 24, suicide was the third leading cause. Other statistics reveal that more than 90% of people who commit suicide have a mental illness, and that for every one suicide in Michigan there are approximately 25 failed attempts.

“Oakland Family Services is deeply convicted about the need to reach out to hurting teens,” states James Schepper, Manager of Clinical Services for Oakland Family Services’ Walled Lake and Berkley sites. “A great loss is felt every time a child or teenager ends his or her life before they’ve had a chance to live. Training educators and communities on how teens act out their depression can reduce the incidents of suicide and give these youth a chance at successful living,” Schepper explains. “In short, what we do is about the children.”

Oakland Family Services, in concert with Michigan suicide prevention coalitions, firmly believes that most suicides are preventable with appropriate education, awareness and intervention methods. Agency staff work actively to educate families and schools on signs of suicidal ideation, and have become a trusted referral source for concerned teachers and administrators regarding high-risk students. Structured treatment and support for families and adolescents dealing with depression is also incorporated in the agency's behavioral health continuum of care.

Oakland Family Services is in full support of the recently approved Chase Edwards Law, and will offer its background and experience to the Michigan Department of Education as they develop the curriculum to help schools monitor and understand the warning signs of suicide as well as give insights into proper referral and treatment.

Oakland Family Services is a private, nonprofit, human service agency that provides prevention, education, support and treatment programs to families and individuals throughout Oakland County and southeastern Michigan.