

Legislation would provide \$100M for emergency-department suicide prevention

Reps. Eliot Engel and Gus Bilirakis on Monday introduced legislation to curb the country's rising suicide rate. The law would allocate \$100 million in federal funding over a five-year period to emergency departments to help identify and treat individuals at a high risk of suicide.

The money would be earmarked for training emergency department clinicians to identify high-risk individuals and developing programs to coordinate care and follow-up services, Engel's office said. It also would go toward supporting the recruitment and retention of behavioral health professionals who specialize in treating those experiencing suicidal ideation and the development of telehealth and other approaches.

Suicide rates in New York have increased by about 30% since 2000, Engel, a Democrat who represents New York's 16th congressional district, encompassing parts of the Bronx and Westchester County, said in a statement. The legislation created with Bilirakis, a Republican from Florida, would "leverage the skills of nurses and emergency department professionals who are trained in identifying and treating at-risk individuals to help end this crisis and save lives."

Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the country and was responsible for about 47,000 deaths in 2017, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Suicides and suicide attempts cost the country about \$70 billion per year in lifetime medical and work-loss costs.