

# U.S. Rep. Steil: Leads 19 colleagues in letter to CDC addressing youth suicide

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**WASHINGTON, DC** — Today, Congressman Bryan Steil (WI-01) sent a letter to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) inquiring when the agency will release final data for suicide rates among children in 2021. Ahead of the National Launch of the 988 Mental Health Hotline, the letter urges the CDC, the leading agency dedicated to improving mental health outcomes for children, to release finalized data on suicides among children as soon as possible.

The letter states: “Childhood is a critical period to prevent and treat mental health. Half of all mental illness occurs before a person turns 14 years old. The number of children admitted to children’s hospitals for thoughts of suicide or self-harm has doubled since 2016.”

“The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated a worsening crisis in our society: our children’s mental health. The data on suicide rates among children is an important tool needed to strengthen our mental health infrastructure. As we approach the coming school year, this critical data will help us make informed decisions to support our children and improve their mental health,” **said Steil.**

## **Background:**

Suicide is the second leading cause of death among youth ages 15-24. According to a May 2020 CDC study, emergency department visits for suicide attempts among adolescents aged 12-17 was 39% higher than the same period in 2019.

The CDC has released provisional data on the “count of deaths by leading cause of

death” for 2021 which can be found [here](#). Six months into 2022, the CDC has yet to release final data on youth suicide in 2021.

Representative Steil has been active in children’s mental health since arriving in Congress. His work has includes hosting a roundtable in Racine County on youth mental health, supporting targeted funding to improve children’s mental health, and cosponsoring legislation requiring the FCC to designate 9-8-8 as the universal telephone number for a national suicide prevention and mental health hotline.

The letter was signed by Reps. Brian Fitzpatrick, Brian Mast, Tom Tiffany, Maria Salazar, Bill Posey, Vicky Hartzler, Don Bacon, Victoria Spartz, Brad Wenstrup, John Rutherford, Kat Cammack, William Timmons, Louie Gohmert, Rick Crawford, Mariannette Miller-Meeks, Jackie Walorski, Greg Murphy, and Dan Meuser.

To read the full text of the letter, click [here](#).