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Steineke Calls for Release of Suicide Prevention Funds

MADISON – Weeks after Republican lawmakers approved funding to bolster our state’s suicide prevention efforts, the Evers’ administration has managed to drag its feet and put in serious jeopardy a program designed to literally save lives. Earlier today, Assembly Majority Leader Jim Steineke (R-Kaukauna) [sent a letter to leadership at the state’s Department of Health Services](#) demanding that these critical funds be released immediately.

“With a topic as sensitive as suicide prevention, one would hope that Governor Evers and his team would move with expediency knowing that every minute we wait, we could be saving lives,” said Steineke. “Unfortunately, despite receiving calls from both sides of the aisle to move expediently to invest in this preventative program, the administration seems to be folding to bureaucratic red tape and threatening Wisconsin citizens’ access to this critical, life-saving service.”

The program in question is a text-based service operated by the Kaukauna-[based Center for Suicide Awareness](#). As a part of a Speaker’s Task Force on Suicide Prevention, a bipartisan group of lawmakers [called for an investment of state resources](#) to support the Center’s work in an interim report issued last month. [Amid calls from several Democrat lawmakers](#) and [even the Governor himself](#), legislative Republicans voted to release the funding needed to support the Center’s programming.

Despite this, the Center for Suicide Awareness has been told it may take *months* for these dollars to be released – prompting serious delays in their programming and jeopardizing the life-saving work that the group does each day.

“It’s no secret that suicide is a problem that is facing too many of our farmers, friends, and family,” said Steineke. “Today, I’m simply asking Governor Evers and his colleagues to do what is right and prioritize the needs of those contemplating such a terrible fate by releasing the funds that could help save their lives.”

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Comprised of a bipartisan group of representatives, the Speaker’s Task Force on Suicide Prevention spent several weeks traveling the state to solicit feedback from experts discussing the state’s current approach to suicide prevention. Recently producing a series of policy recommendations, it is expected that the State Assembly will be acting on these bills in the days to come.