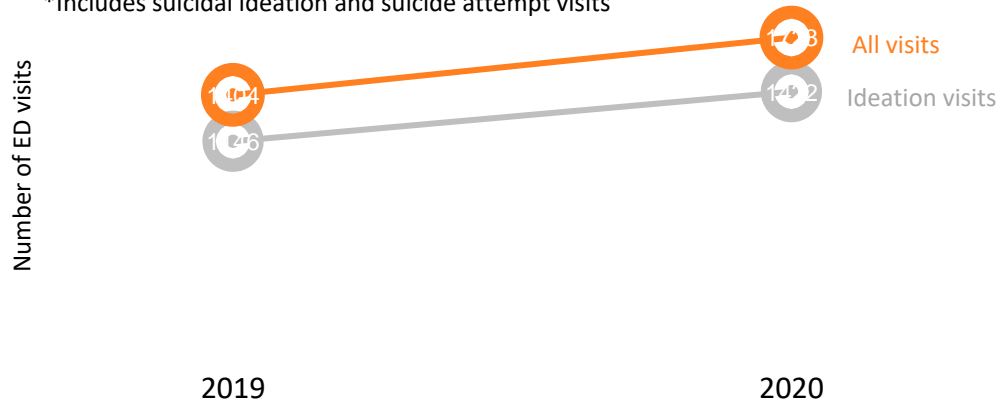


Trends in Suicide-related Emergency Department visits among American Indians & Alaska Natives in Washington during COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in negative mental health impacts among adults and children, including increased in anxiety and fear, sense of isolation, and disrupted mental health services and access. American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) communities in the Pacific Northwest region experienced a higher burden of suicide before COVID-19, and there are concerns that this burden has worsened during the pandemic. This fact sheet describes trends in suicide-related emergency department (ED) visits among Washington AI/AN communities during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The number of **all AI/AN suicide-related* emergency department visits increased by 23%** during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, compared to pre-pandemic in 2019.

*Includes suicidal ideation and suicide attempt visits



Suicide Ideation ED Visits

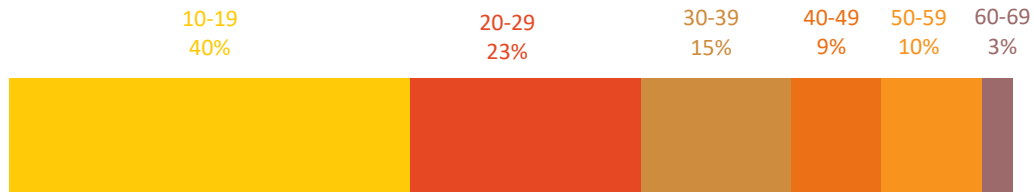
AI/AN suicide ideation ED visits increased by 24% in 2020 compared to 2019. The ED monthly rate of suicide ideation for AI/AN reached its highest in May 2020, which was over 24% higher than the pre-pandemic monthly average. Among ED patients, AI/AN were 1.4 times more likely to have a suicide ideation visit than non-AI/AN in 2020. There was a higher percent increase for suicide ideation seen among AI/AN women compared to AI/AN men (7% vs. 2%).

Suicide Attempt ED visits

The rate of suicide attempt ED visits reached its highest in September 2020, which was 45% higher than the previous year monthly average in 2019. AI/AN were 1.6 times more likely to have a suicide attempt than non-AI/AN.

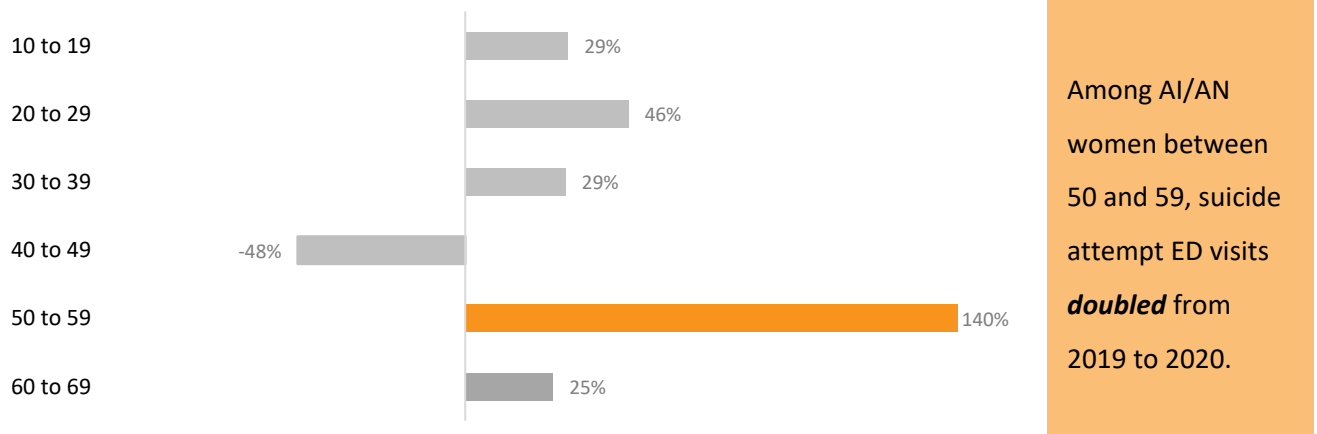
The number of suicide attempt ED visits among AI/AN increased by 17% in 2020 compared to 2019

AI/AN **between 10 and 29** accounted for 63% of ED visits for suicide attempts in 2020



The increases in suicide attempt between 2019 and 2020 were seen in the four age groups: 10-19, 30-39, 50-59, and 60-69.

Alarming, there was a 29% increase in ED visits for suicide attempts among AI/AN women between 2019 and 2020. Suicide attempt ED visits increased across age groups among AI/AN women, and especially among women aged 50-59 and 20-29.



Data Source

- Analyses are based on information reported to the Rapid Health Information NetwOrk (RHINO), the syndromic surveillance program at the Washington State Department of Health.
- Suicide-related, suicide ideation, and suicide attempt ED records were identified using validated CDC definitions for syndromic surveillance data.
- These data may undercount suicide-related ED visits by roughly 28% due to the misclassification of AI/AN people in emergency department data.

Contact

For more information or additional data, please contact the IDEA-NW project at

ideanw@npaihb.org

www.npaihb.org/idea-nw