



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Meridian Supports The Jason Foundation to Launch Statewide Suicide Prevention Campaign in Illinois

The campaign will combat the “Silent Epidemic” of suicide through a grassroots approach to spread awareness and provide education.

CHICAGO (Mar. 31, 2022) —Meridian of Illinois, a leading provider of government-sponsored managed care services in Illinois, and The Jason Foundation, Inc. (JFI), a nationally recognized leader in suicide awareness and prevention, announced today the launch of a statewide initiative to combat suicide deaths: *Illinois Won’t Be Silent* (#ILWontBeSilent).

According to The Jason Foundation, suicide ranks as the sixth leading cause of death for ages 10 to 65 in Illinois, averaging more than three deaths per day in this age group, and their key message is that suicide is preventable. Four out of five individuals considering suicide give some sign of their intentions, either verbally or behaviorally, and it is JFI’s mission to make this known to save lives.

The campaign will be focused on building awareness and providing information, tools, and resources to better identify and/or assist an individual who may be struggling with suicidal thoughts.

“We will be working to assemble collaborative partners within business, government, non-profits, and the community to help raise the positive conversation on suicide and mental health across the state,” said Clark Flatt, President of The Jason Foundation. “Individuals and organizations alike have the opportunity to make a difference and save a life.”

“We are excited about our partnership with The Jason Foundation to continue our efforts to support behavioral health initiatives in the communities we serve across Illinois,” said Mayank K. Shah, M.D., and Chief Medical Officer of Meridian of Illinois. “Together with our partners, Illinois Won’t Be Silent will support our commitment to helping individuals across the state live safer, healthier lives.”

JFI will act as the administrative agency to help coordinate efforts in Illinois. Their Affiliate Office at Timberline Knolls will help supply the state with programs and resources for this cause. Also, JFI will work with local Ambassadors who will aid by raising awareness of the campaign and the organization will offer more details to come over the course of the next couple of months.

As with all programs and resources made available by The Jason Foundation, there is no charge for any material or training offered to the public. Find more information at www.ILWontBeSilent.com.

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**About Meridian of Illinois**

Meridian of Illinois offers three managed care plans: the Meridian Medicaid Plan, the Meridian Medicare-Medicaid Plan, and the Meridian Managed Long Term Services & Supports Plan. We connect members to care and offer comprehensive services to support lifelong health and wellness. Learn more at ILMeridian.com.

About The Jason Foundation

The Jason Foundation is a non-profit organization dedicated to fighting the “silent epidemic” of youth and young adult suicide through educational programs for young people, educators, parents, and other community groups. Since their inception, The Jason Foundation has never charged a school, family, or community for use of their programs or materials. For more information or to find the closest JFI Affiliate Office, visit JFI’s website. www.jasonfoundation.com