

Pain Isn't Always Obvious



Suicide Is Preventable

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# KNOW THE SIGNS MEDIA ANALYSIS

*Final Report*

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ADEASE

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Know the Signs implemented a three-pronged approach to increase California's news media adherence to the *Recommendations*:

- direct outreach to media with the *Recommendations*;
- education for messengers with "Making Headlines: A Guide to Engaging the Media in Suicide Prevention in California" and two webinars to introduce it;
- a series of eight forums to reach messengers and media representatives.

We then sought to measure how well California-based newspaper reporting adhered to the *Recommendations* and whether there were changes after the period of most intensive intervention. Eight of our 11 hypotheses were supported by the findings which show the potential of educating both the media *and* suicide prevention spokespeople.

- There was an **increase** in the percentage and total number of articles covering the *topic of suicide prevention*, and a **decrease** in the percentage of articles that addressed only addressed a *suicide death or attempt*.
- The percentage of articles that provided a suicide prevention *resource* **increased by almost threefold**.
- The percentage of articles that discussed the *method* of a specific suicide death/attempt, including the weapon used and graphic details, **decreased by more than 50%**.
- The percentage of articles that used more *appropriate language* ("killed himself," "died by suicide") to describe suicide **doubled**.
- We did not see a large shift in *quotes* by or interviews with suicide prevention experts and saw a slight decrease in quotes by mental health professionals. However, the 2013 analysis showed a greater *diversity* in the roles of people who were quoted, and **a decrease** in interviews with *family members* of decedents, who often are not versed in prevention messaging.
- In addition, we found *more articles that had been written by suicide prevention practitioners or spokespeople themselves* or who were cited as "special contributors".

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## Purpose

The California Suicide Prevention Social Marketing Campaign (“KTS”)<sup>1</sup>, funded by counties through the voter-approved Mental Health Services Act (Proposition 63) and administered by the California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA), sought to improve how news media cover suicide deaths and prevention activities throughout the state. In order to determine whether improvements were made, we analyzed news reports at Baseline (2011) and Follow-Up (2013) to determine whether KTS educational outreach interventions to agency representatives, suicide prevention experts, and journalists regarding best practices for reporting on suicide increased adherence to the established consensus recommendations for reporting on suicide. The baseline report “Media analysis” can be found in the Resource Center of [Your Voice Counts](#) under Data and Reports.

## The Impact of Media Contagion<sup>2</sup>

As the [Baseline Media Analysis](#) described, the news media can have a powerful influence on how the public perceives suicide. Appropriate reporting can relay accurate facts, raise awareness about suicide prevention, and educate the public on resources and treatment options. When suicides are not reported appropriately, the media can indirectly transmit suicide contagion, the process by which one suicide becomes a compelling model for successive suicides (Gould, 2001). Such coverage can also perpetuate myths such as the belief that suicides cannot be prevented, or reinforce barriers to seeking help.

The consensus *Recommendations for Reporting on Suicide*, last revised in 2011 ([www.reportingonsuicide.org](http://www.reportingonsuicide.org)), provide suggestions to the news media on how to address suicide.

## Intervention

Know the Signs campaign staff<sup>3</sup> implemented a three-pronged approach to increase California’s news media adherence to the *Recommendations*. Our first goal was to ensure that reporters, editors and producers were aware of the *Recommendations* as a necessary first step toward implementing them. We also wanted to educate community messengers who might be called upon for interviews and comments, and encourage them to conduct outreach to their local media to increase coverage of their suicide prevention activities.

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1. Learn more about *Know the Signs*, the California Suicide Prevention Social Marketing Campaign, at [www.suicideispreventable.org](http://www.suicideispreventable.org).

2. For more information on the research behind media contagion, please refer to the Baseline Media Analysis Report, 2011, available in the Resource Center of Your Voice Counts [www.yourvoicecounts.org](http://www.yourvoicecounts.org)

3. Sandra Black, Anara Guard, and Theresa Ly, working at the time for EDC, Inc., a subcontractor to AdEase.

## 1: Reaching the media directly with the *Recommendations*

We reached out to a number of journalism organizations, requesting that they run articles and post online about the *Recommendations*. The most responsive were:

- Reporting on Health: November 2012. Posted article on website in reaching over 2,000 members
- California Newspaper Publishers Association: December 2012. Printed article in quarterly bulletin sent to daily and weekly newspapers throughout the state
- California Broadcasters Association: Distributed a brief article to their 1000+ member stations

In addition, any time that a media representative contacted KTS, our response routinely provided the *Recommendations*. This method reached a number of journalists, including the Executive Editor of the *Sacramento Bee*, *Orange County Register*, *Cal State Fullerton Daily Titan*, KZFR-FM, KTLK-AM, Capital Public Radio, and the Free Your Mind radio program.

## 2: Messenger education

In October 2012, KTS published “[Making Headlines](#): A Guide to Engaging the Media in Suicide Prevention in California” which was disseminated to all 58 county behavioral health agencies. This guide provides individuals and organizations engaged in suicide prevention with tools to generate media coverage and skills to act as effective spokespeople. The guide also includes a copy of the *Recommendations*. Two [webinars](#) were held the following month to introduce the guide with attendees from 37 counties participating. One [webinar](#) was designed for small, rural and frontier counties.

## 3: Forums reaching messengers and the media

Eight media forums involving over 300 individuals were convened throughout California<sup>4</sup> from September 2012 to September 2013. Each forum engaged community and agency messengers along with media representatives about how to adhere to the *Recommendations*, develop partnerships with the media, and craft suicide prevention messages. The forum content presented by KTS staff was based on the Making Headlines toolkit and centered on the two simple concepts of “Do No Harm” and “Promote Prevention” as well as offering additional messaging and reporting tactics. Media representation included San Diego *Union-Tribune*, San Diego and Coronado Patch, KOGO radio, *North County Times*, East County Magazine, Univision, *Stockton Record*, Truckee Tahoe Radio, *Sacramento News & Review*, *Sierra Sun*, and others. We also presented a workshop to future journalists through the Journalism Association of Community Colleges.

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4. Los Angeles, Sacramento, San Diego, San Joaquin, Superior Region, and Tahoe-Truckee area

# Hypotheses

KTS hypothesized that this three-pronged approach to improving media adherence to the *Recommendations for Reporting on Suicide* would affect the content of news coverage in these ways:

- **Increase** the number and proportion of news articles that:
  - Cover suicide prevention topics (Hypothesis 1)
  - Share suicide prevention resources (Hypothesis 2)
  - Share information on how to help someone who is experiencing thoughts of suicide (Hypothesis 3)
  - Mention at least one warning sign or risk factor (Hypothesis 4)
  - Quote a suicide prevention or mental health expert (Hypothesis 5)
- **Decrease** the number and proportion of news articles that:
  - Imply a single cause or condition preceded a suicide death or attempt (Hypothesis 6)
  - Specify the location where a death or attempt occurred (Hypothesis 7)
  - Specify the method of a suicide death or attempt (Hypothesis 8)
  - Describe the contents of a suicide note (Hypothesis 9)
  - Use inappropriate language to describe suicide (Hypothesis 10)
  - Use sensational language to describe suicide epidemiology (Hypothesis 11)

Note that we did not propose to change the number of reports on suicide deaths. Such reporting is dependent on a number of factors outside of our control, including numbers of deaths, incidents involving celebrities or people of local renown, and policies of local media outlets that affect their coverage.

## Method of analysis

KTS used Lexis-Nexis ([www.nexis.com](http://www.nexis.com)) to search for relevant articles published in California-based newspapers from July 1 to December 31 in both 2011 and 2013. Weekly papers, business papers and publications in languages other than English were excluded. The search terms included variations on “suicide” and “killed self”. Uses of the term metaphorically, such as “political suicide” or “economic suicide” were excluded, along with obituaries, op-eds, articles that were: a) fewer than 50 words; b) duplicates of other articles; c) discussed suicide only in passing; or d) covered deaths that had not been ruled a suicide. Unlike the 2011 analysis, the 2013 search found no relevant television broadcasts via Vocus. This comparison of the two data sets analyzes newspaper coverage only. See the Baseline Analysis for a detailed description of the adherence tool and indicators measured.

## Sample size

	Baseline (2011)	Follow-Up (2013)
Number of articles analyzed	161	222
Numbers of newspapers represented (Appendix 1)	28	33

## Summary of findings

Area of analysis	Pre vs. Post Findings	Summary	Hypotheses
Topics covered in the articles (Chart 1)	<p>Suicide death/attempt only</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre: 67%</li> <li>• Post: 57%</li> </ul> <p>Topic of suicide only</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre: 16%</li> <li>• Post: 25%</li> </ul> <p>Suicide death/attempt AND topic of suicide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre: 17%</li> <li>• Post: 18%</li> </ul>	An <b>increase</b> in the percentage of articles covering the topic of suicide prevention, and a <b>decrease</b> in the percentage that addressed only addressed a suicide death or attempt.	Hypothesis 1 <b>Supported</b>
Resources provided (Chart 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre: 8%</li> <li>• Post: 23%</li> </ul>	<b>An almost threefold increase</b> in the percentage of articles that provided a suicide prevention resource	Hypothesis 2 <b>Supported</b>
Information on “how to help” (Chart 3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre: 5%</li> <li>• Post: 13%</li> </ul>	The percentage of articles that provided information on how to help someone at risk for suicide <b>more than doubled</b>	Hypothesis 3 <b>Supported</b>
Warning signs & risk factors for suicide (Chart 4)	<p>No mention of any warning signs or risk factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre: 56%</li> <li>• Post: 53%</li> </ul> <p>At least 1 warning sign mentioned</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre: 11%</li> <li>• Post: 15%</li> </ul> <p>At least 1 risk factor mentioned</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre: 40%</li> <li>• Post: 45%</li> </ul>	A <b>small increase</b> in the percentage of articles that provided some contextual information regarding the warning signs and risk factors for suicide	Hypothesis 4 <b>Supported</b>
Who was quoted (Chart 5)	<p>Law enforcement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre: 55%</li> <li>• Post: 50%</li> </ul> <p>Family members of decedent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre: 25%</li> <li>• Post: 17%</li> </ul> <p>Suicide prevention experts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre: 13%</li> <li>• Post: 14%</li> </ul> <p>Mental health professionals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre: 10%</li> <li>• Post: 7%</li> </ul>	An <b>increase</b> of only one percentage point in articles quoting suicide prevention experts, and a <b>decrease</b> in the percentage of articles quoting mental health professionals. There was also a <b>decrease</b> in quotes by family members of decedents. However, there was greater diversity in the roles of people who were quoted.	Hypothesis 5 <b>Not supported</b>

Area of analysis	Pre vs. Post Findings	Summary	Hypotheses
Single event/ condition preceding suicide (Chart 6)	Implying a single event or condition prior to suicide <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre: 13%</li> <li>• Post: 14%</li> </ul>	An <b>increase</b> of only one percentage point in articles implying that a single event or condition could lead to a suicide	Hypothesis 6 <b>Not supported</b>
Information on location of suicide (Chart 7)	Describing the exact location of a specific suicide death/attempt <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre: 50%</li> <li>• Post: 40%</li> </ul>	A <b>20% decrease</b> in the percentage of articles providing an exact location where a specific suicide death/attempt took place.	Hypothesis 7 <b>Supported</b>
Information about suicide method (Chart 8)	Describing the method of a specific suicide death/attempt <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre: 82%</li> <li>• Post: 40%</li> </ul>	A <b>decrease of more than half</b> in the percentage of articles that discussed the method of a specific suicide death/attempt, including the weapon or graphic details.	Hypothesis 8 <b>Supported</b>
Suicide note (Chart 9)	Content of suicide note <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre: 6%</li> <li>• Post: 4%</li> </ul>	A <b>decrease</b> of two percentage points of articles that provided contents of a suicide note	Hypothesis 9 <b>Supported</b>
Language used to describe suicide (Chart 10)	Inappropriate language <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre: 69%</li> <li>• Post: 34%</li> </ul> Appropriate language <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre: 18%</li> <li>• Post: 40%</li> </ul> Both inappropriate and appropriate language <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre: 14%</li> <li>• Post: 15%</li> </ul> Neither inappropriate or appropriate language used <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre: 17%</li> <li>• Post: 42%</li> </ul>	An <b>increase of more than double</b> in the percentage of articles that used more appropriate language to describe suicide, and a <b>decrease by half</b> of articles using inappropriate language.	Hypothesis 10 <b>Supported</b>
Sensational language (Chart 11)	Language that sensationalized rates or numbers of suicide <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre: 2%</li> <li>• Post: 6%</li> </ul>	The percentage of articles that used sensational language to describe rates or numbers of suicide <b>tripled</b> .	Hypothesis 11 <b>Not supported</b>

## Observations & Discussion

Topics: The percentage of articles devoted to the topic of suicide (which often included information on prevention) vs. suicide deaths changed positively from 2011 to 2013. At baseline, 67% of articles were about deaths or attempts and only 16% about the topic. At follow-up, 57% were about deaths and 25% about the topic. In addition, the total number of articles increased from 161 to 222 so that the *number* of articles that addressed prevention increased as well as the proportion.

We also observed an increase in articles that had been written by suicide prevention practitioners or spokespeople themselves or who were cited as “special contributors” to the article. (For example, John Bateson of the San Francisco SP Center, Leeann Gouveia of Fresno-based SOS, and Noah Whitaker of Tulare/Kings County SP Task Force.) This development likely had an impact on the increased number of articles that were focused on suicide prevention, as opposed to covering suicide deaths. In addition, many articles on the topic of suicide included discussions on suicide as it relates to bullying and to mental health issues.

Resources: The increase in inclusion of resources in news articles may be attributed to several factors in addition to the recommendation to always provide a helpful resource: this step is relatively simple and easy to do; the number of suicide prevention resources available increased during the two-year period as a result of California’s suicide prevention initiatives; and suicide prevention spokespeople may have formed stronger relationships with the media and successfully advocated for local crisis lines, organizations and websites to be mentioned.

Quotes: We did not see a large shift in quotes by or interviews with “suicide prevention experts” and saw a slight decrease in quotes from mental health professionals. However, the 2013 analysis showed a greater diversity in the kinds of people who were interviewed and quoted, and a decrease in interviews with family members of decedents, who often are not versed in prevention messaging. Many experts who work for county agencies and other governmental entities may face internal barriers on speaking to the press.

Underlying causes: The percentage of articles implying that a single event or condition (bullying, loss of job, depression) led to a suicide increased by one point.

Language: The analysis showed an increase in the percentage of articles that used sensational language to describe rates or numbers of suicides (e.g., “skyrocketing rates”). However, the total number of relevant articles was quite small.

Other observations: In 2011, the pool of available articles to analyze was skewed by extensive and ongoing coverage of two deaths, both in the San Diego area. One involved a well-known public figure and the other was a controversial death. Both events were reported with graphic and sensational details frequently included. In 2013, the analysis pool was skewed to a lesser degree by a large number of articles on the topic of bullying and its purported link to suicide.

## Conclusion

The majority of our hypotheses (eight out of 11) were supported by the findings, which show the potential of educating both the media *and* suicide prevention spokespeople on effective messaging and reporting on suicide prevention. Community spokespeople are encouraged to craft their suicide prevention messages carefully to be consistent and to include local resources, and to have protocols in place so they are able to speak to the media. We also encourage county agencies and CBOs to place messages on their websites that are consistent with the *Recommendations* for after-hours access by news professionals on deadline.

## Next Steps

The National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention has just launched (June 2014) the [Framework for Successful Messaging](#) which is designed to help change the public conversation about suicide and suicide prevention. The Framework is based on four key factors to consider when developing public messages: strategy, safety, positive narrative, and use of existing guidelines. It is intended for *suicide prevention messengers* as they create communications to be released into the public domain. By focusing first on messengers in the fields of mental health and suicide prevention, the Framework can help ensure that the news media will ultimately be able to portray these issues responsibly and accurately by tapping informed messengers for quotes and resources.

The Know the Signs team has played a role in helping to develop the Framework and its companion website [www.SuicidePreventionMessaging.org](http://www.SuicidePreventionMessaging.org) over the past two years and our forums were designed to complement the Framework. Community and agency messengers can now use the Framework to help develop their suicide prevention messages before engaging the news media. The combination of efforts to improve messaging among the messengers and among reporters holds great promise for the future.

## Chart 1: Topics covered

We wanted to see a shift in coverage of suicide as a topic compared to coverage of suicide deaths and attempts.

Baseline (2011) Total number of articles:  $n = 161$

67% of articles (108) covered a suicide or suicide attempt only;

16% (26) covered the topic of suicide only; and

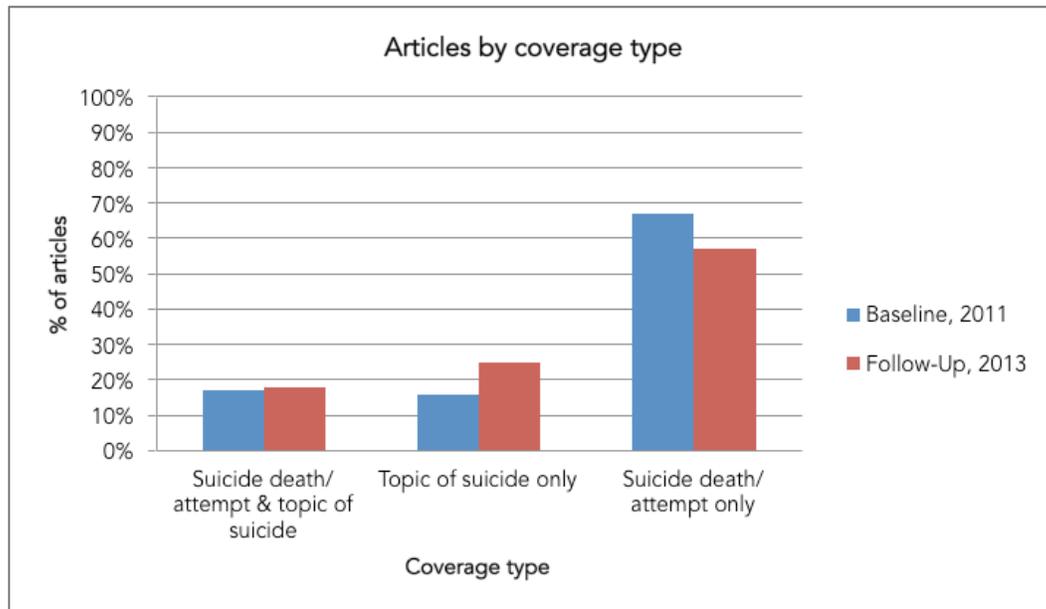
17% (27) covered both a specific suicide and the general topic of suicide.

Follow-Up (2013) Total number of articles:  $n = 222$

57% of articles (127) covered a suicide or suicide attempt only;

25% (55) covered the topic of suicide only; and

18% (40) covered both a specific suicide and the general topic of suicide.



Attempts were defined as individuals who made an effort at self-harm or placed themselves in imminent danger.

“Topic of suicide” includes suicide prevention event, training or programs, survivor perspectives, research, suicide as it relates to mental health, suicide as it relates to bullying, and suicide prevention advocacy efforts.

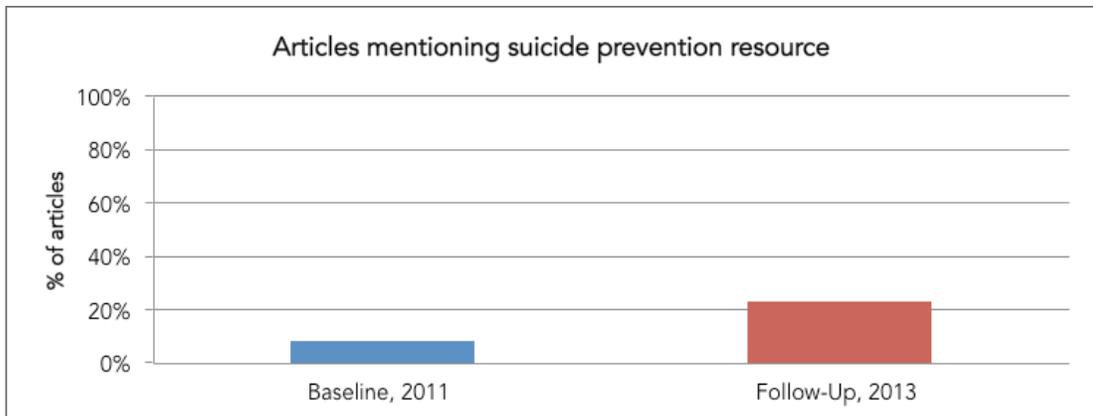
Note that the total *number* of articles devoted to the topic of suicide increased, as well as the percentage.

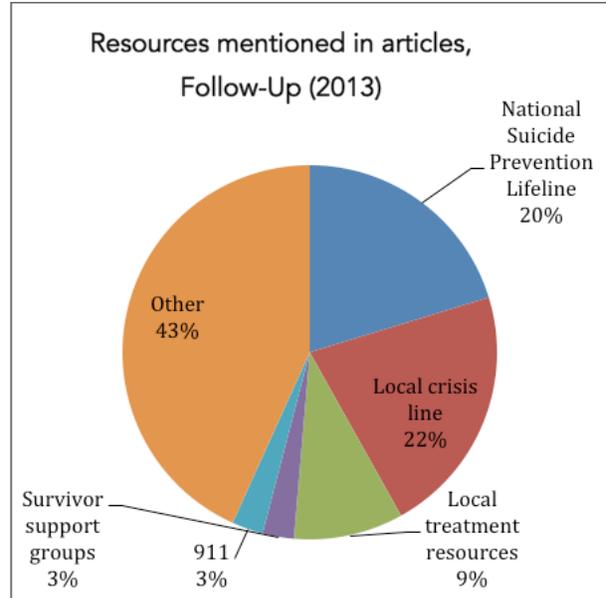
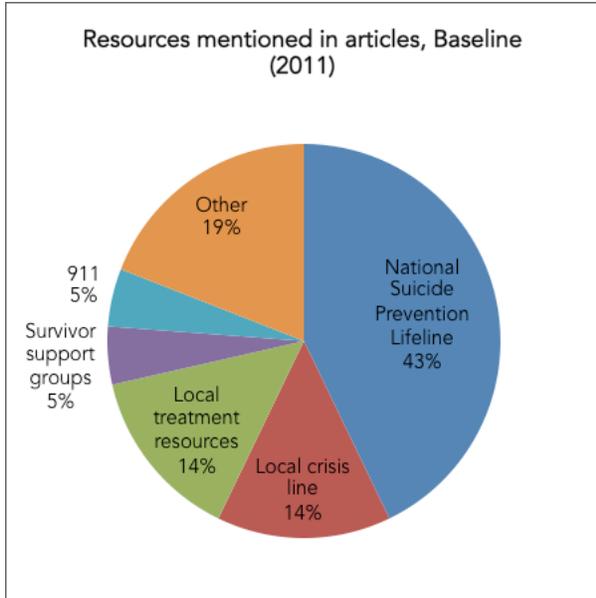
## Chart 2: Resources provided

**We wanted to see an increase in including resources for suicide prevention.**

Baseline (2011): Only 8% of articles (13) included any kind of resource for suicide prevention. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline was most frequently mentioned.

Follow-Up (2013): 23% of articles (51) included any kind of resource for suicide prevention. The total number of articles including a resource was almost four times as great as in 2011.





“Other” resources included:

- Suicide Prevention Resource Center
- 1-800-SUICIDE crisis hotline
- 2-1-1 local services number
- Youth service programs
- Domestic violence hotlines
- Support groups
- Public health/suicide prevention awareness programs (not providing mental health or suicide prevention services)

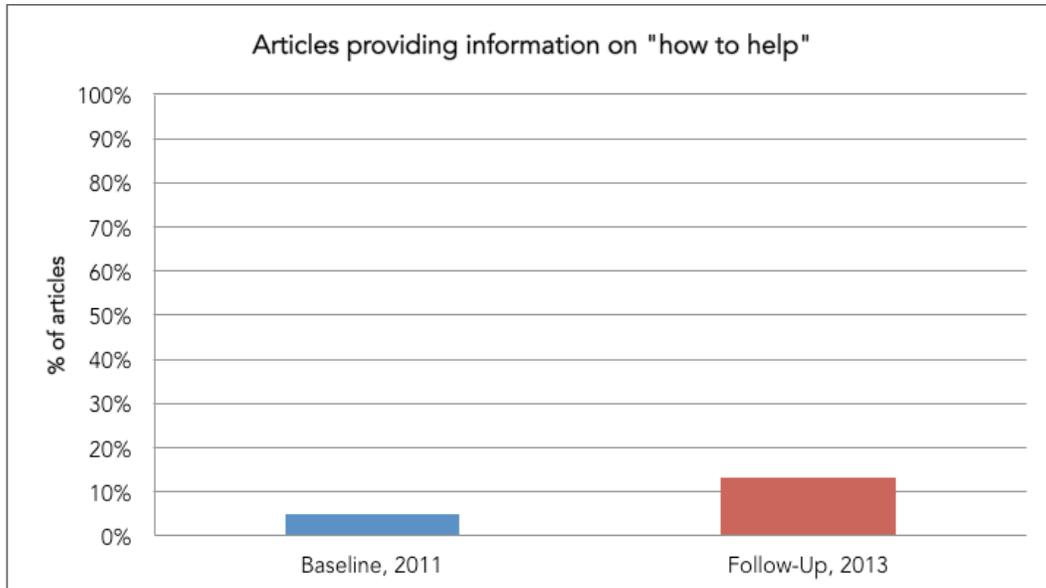
Although the KTS team focused on asking journalists to provide a single resource—the national Lifeline—many local spokespeople may have provided other resources to their newspapers. In addition, papers may have wanted to include local resources rather than a national number.

### Chart 3: Information on “How to Help”

We wanted to see an increase in information on how to help.

Baseline (2011): Only 5% of articles (8) provided information on what to do to help someone who may be suicidal.

Follow-Up (2013): 13% of articles (29) provided information on what to do to help someone who may be suicidal. The total *number* of articles providing information more than tripled from 2011.



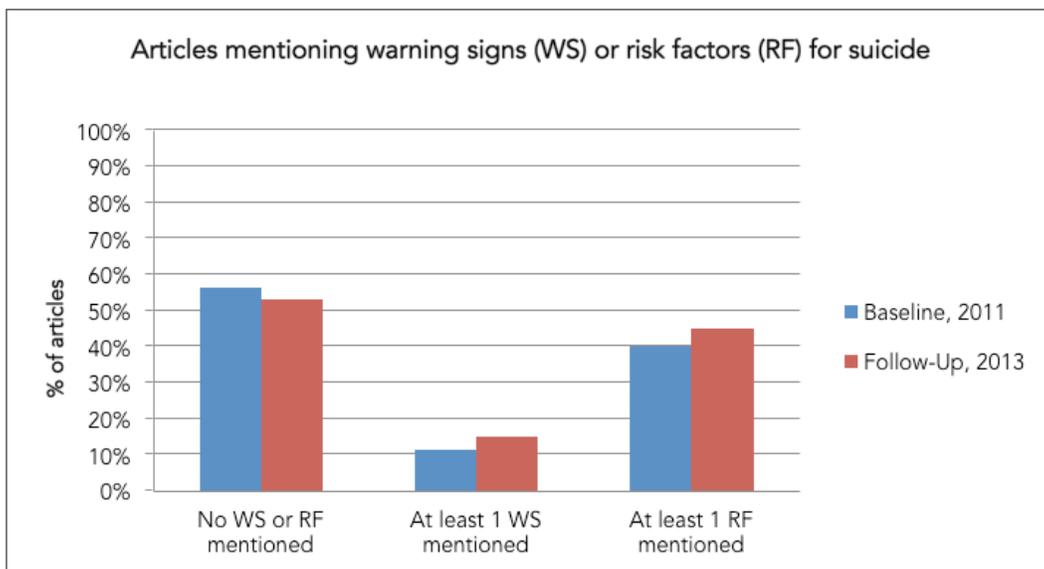
## Chart 4: Warning signs and risk factors for suicide

**We wanted to see an increase in mentions of potential warning signs and risk factors.**

Baseline (2011): 56% of articles (90) did not provide any indication of warning signs or risk factors for suicide; 11% (27) mentioned at least 1 warning sign; and 40% (65) mentioned at least 1 risk factor.

Follow-Up (2013): 53% of articles (118) did not provide any indication of warning signs or risk factors for suicide; 15% (34) mentioned at least 1 warning signs; and 45% (100) mentioned at least 1 risk factor. The total *number* of articles mentioning warning signs and risk factors was greater than in 2011.

*Note:* We did not rate the mentioned warning signs and risk factors for accuracy. If a trait or event was identified by the journalist or by anyone quoted as having contributed to risk or provided warning, we included it in the analysis.



## Warning signs mentioned included:

- Mood changes
- Decreased performance or interest in activities
- Talking about feeling hopeless
- Weight loss
- Looking for a way to kill oneself
- Talking about wanting to die
- Changes in sleep patterns
- Giving away possessions
- Reckless behavior
- Exhibiting anxiety
- Changes in eating behavior
- Talking about feeling trapped
- Talking about feeling worthless
- Lacking personal hygiene
- Exhibiting flat affect
- Talking about feeling like a burden

## Risk factors mentioned included:

- Depression
- Substance abuse
- Relationship issues
- Financial issues
- Legal issues
- Stress
- Family death or illness
- Trauma
- Victim of violence
- Job issues
- Bullying
- Mental illness
- Isolation
- Physical health issues
- Access to lethal means
- Multiple military deployments
- Homelessness
- Lack of acceptance
- Survivor of suicide
- Suicide attempt survivor

## Chart 5: Quotes and references

### We wanted to see more mental health and suicide prevention experts quoted.

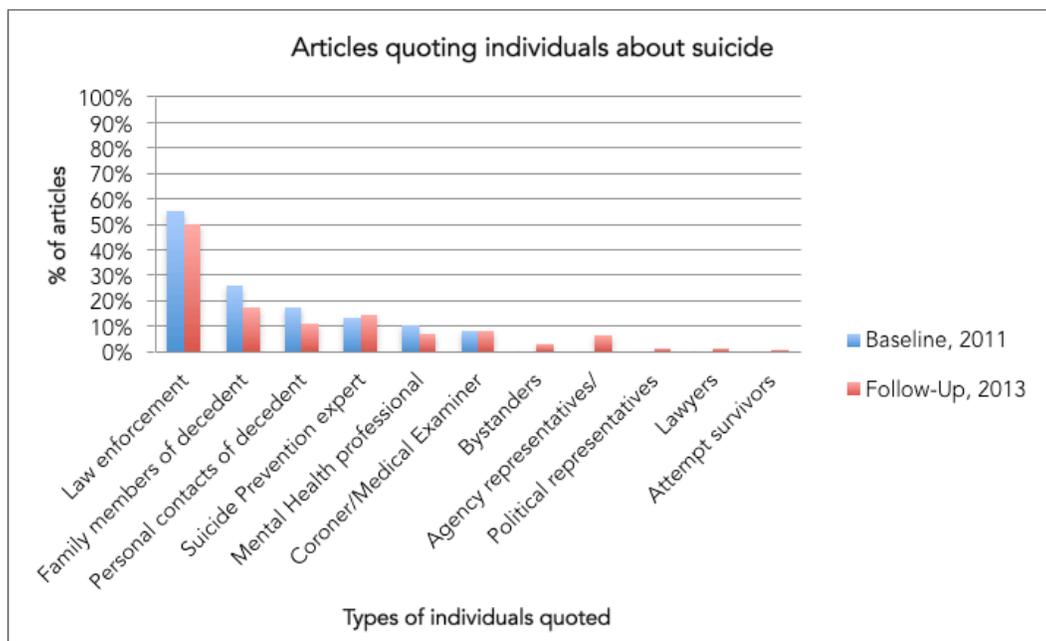
Baseline (2011): 73% of articles (118) quoted individuals, including:

- 55% (65) law enforcement
- 26% (3) family member of the decedent
- 17% (20) friend, neighbor or coworker of the decedent
- 13% (15) suicide prevention expert
- 10% (12) mental health professional
- 8% (8) coroner or a medical examiner

Follow-Up (2013): 92% of articles (206) quoted individuals, including:

- 50% (103) law enforcement
- 17% (35) family member of the decedent
- 11% (22) friend, neighbor or coworker of the decedent
- 14% (29) suicide prevention expert
- 7% (14) mental health professional
- 8% (16) coroner or medical examiner
- 6% (12) organization or agency representative such as PIO
- 3% (6) community member/bystander
- 1% (2) political representative
- 1% (2) lawyer
- 0.5% (1) attempt survivor

The total number of articles offering quotes was almost double from 2011, in part due to the increase in articles that addressed the topic of suicide or the topic and a specific death, compared to articles that only covered a death.

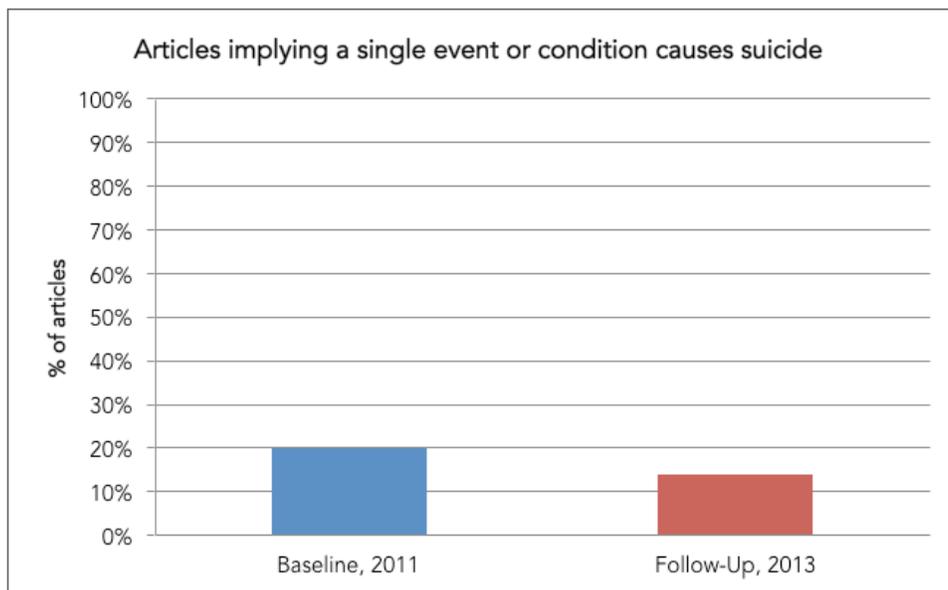


## Chart 6: Single event or condition preceding suicide

We wanted to see a decrease in articles that gave the impression that a single event or condition may have led to a suicide death or attempt.

Baseline (2011): 20% of articles (32) indicated or implied that a single event or condition preceded suicide deaths or attempts.

Follow-Up (2013): 13% of articles (23) indicated or implied that a single event or condition preceded suicide death or attempts. The *number* of articles, as well as the percentage, was smaller.

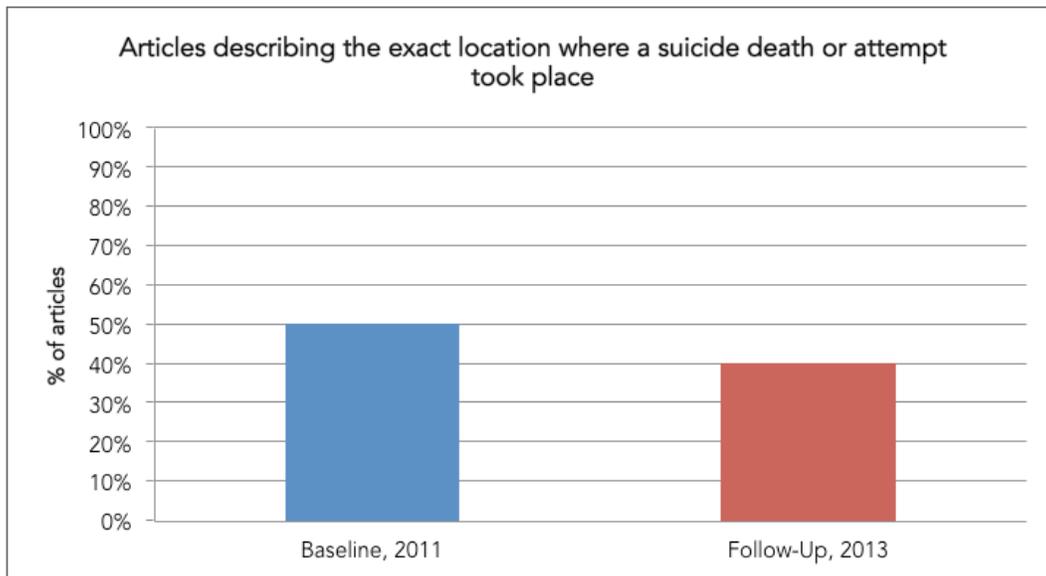


## Chart 7: Information on location of suicide

**We wanted to see a decrease in information on the exact location of a death or attempt.**

Baseline (2011): Of the 135 newspaper articles about a specific suicide death or attempt, 50% (68) described the exact location of the event.

Follow-Up (2013): Of the 167 newspaper articles about a specific suicide death or attempt, 40% (67) described the exact location of the event. Although there was a greater total number of articles that included information on a specific death, the proportion that described the exact location decreased.

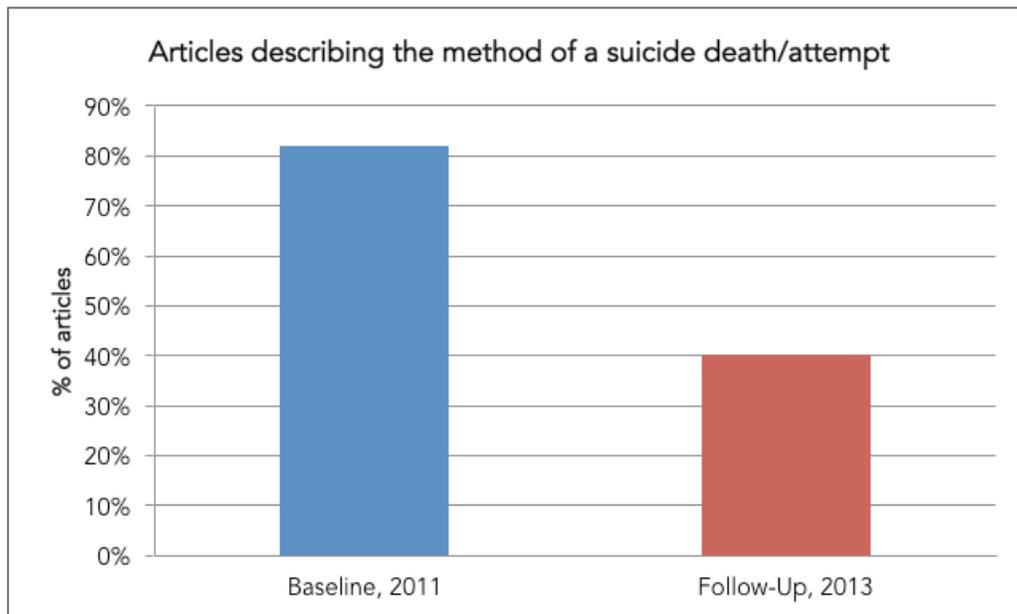


## Chart 8: Information about suicide method

**We wanted to see a decrease in coverage of the method used in a death or attempt.**

Baseline (2011): Of the 167 articles in the sample about a specific suicide death or attempt, 82% (111) mentioned the method. Of these 111 articles, 32% (36) mentioned the specific weapon used in the suicide and 60% (67) provided graphic details about the suicide.

Follow-Up (2013): Of the 167 articles in the sample about a specific suicide death or attempt, 40% (67) mentioned the method. Of these 67 articles, 52% (35) mentioned the specific weapon used in the suicide and 75% (50) provided graphic details about the suicide.

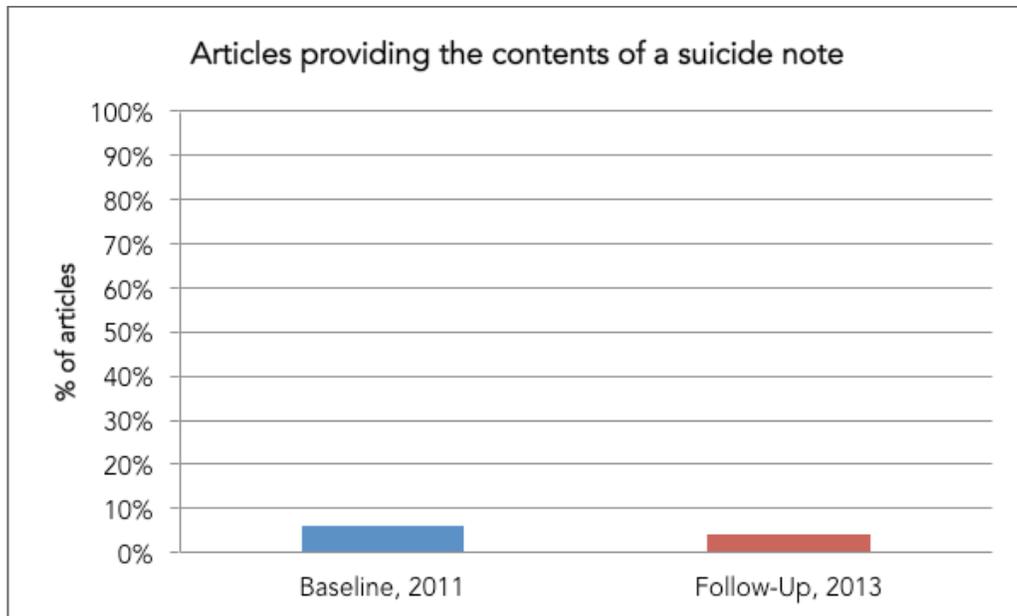


## Chart 9: Suicide note

**We wanted to see a decrease in articles that disclosed the contents of any suicide note.**

Baseline (2011): Of the 135 articles that covered a suicide or suicide attempt, 6% (8) mentioned that a note was found or provided information about the contents of a suicide note.

Follow-Up (2013): Of the 167 articles that covered a suicide or suicide attempt, 4% (6) mentioned that a note was found or provided information about the contents of a suicide note.



## Chart 10: Language used to describe suicide

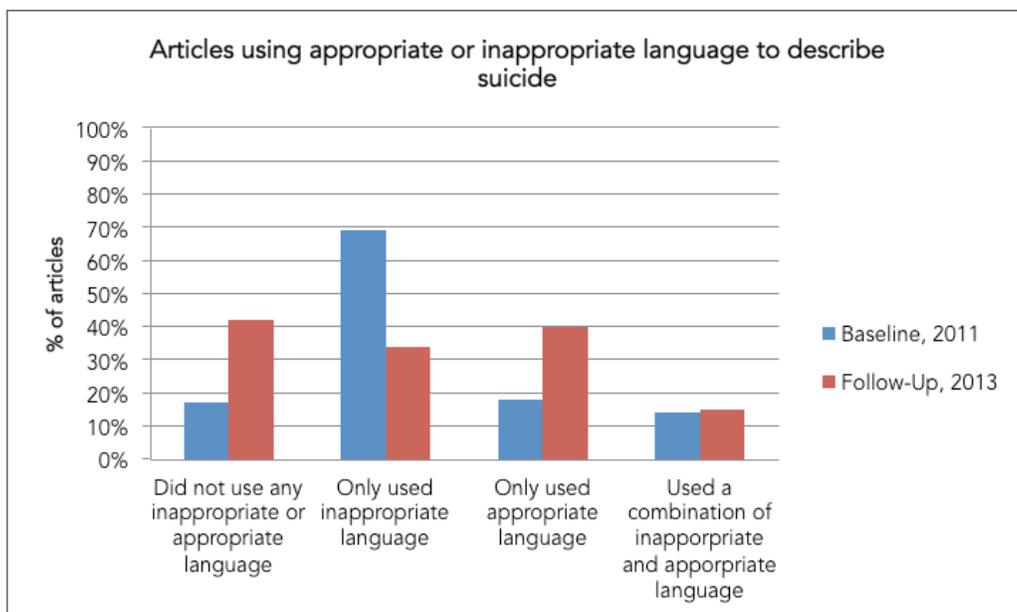
We wanted to see an increase in the use of appropriate language and a decrease in inappropriate language.

Baseline (2011): Of the 161 articles,

- 69% (111) used inappropriate language;
- 18% (29) used appropriate language;
- 17% (27) did not use any inappropriate or appropriate terms; and
- 14% (22) used a combination of both inappropriate or appropriate terms to describe suicide.

Follow-Up (2013): Of the 222 articles,

- 34% (75) used inappropriate language;
- 40% (87) used appropriate terms;
- 42% (94) did not use any inappropriate or appropriate terms; and
- 15% (34) used a combination of both inappropriate or appropriate terms to describe suicide.

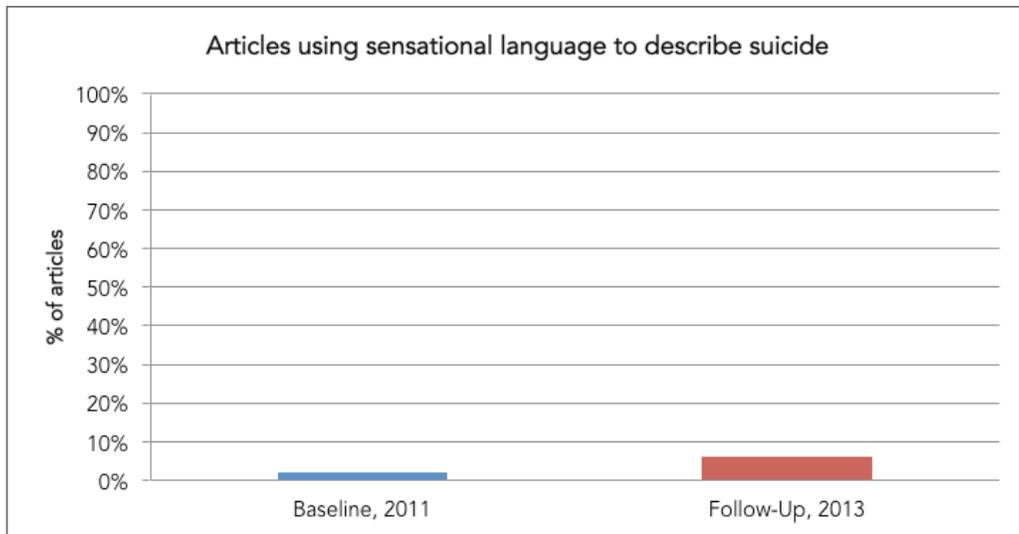


## Chart 11: Sensational language

**We wanted to see a decrease in sensational language describing numbers or rates of suicide.**

Baseline (2011): Of the 161 articles in the sample, 2% (3) used sensational language to describe numbers or rates of suicide.

Follow-Up (2013): Of the 222 articles in the sample, 6% (14) used sensational language to describe numbers or rates of suicide.



## Appendix 1: Newspapers represented in sample

Newspaper	Number and percentage of articles per newspaper	
	Baseline (2011) Total # of articles = 161 Total # of newspapers = 28	Follow-Up (2013) Total # of articles = 222 Total # of newspapers = 33
Chico Enterprise–Record	12 (7.4%)	7 (3.2%)
Contra Costa Times	14 (8.6%)	17 (7.7%)
Daily News of Los Angeles	3 (1.9%)	–
Desert Sun	4 (2.5%)	–
Eureka Times Standard	5 (3.1%)	4 (1.8%)
Fresno Bee	4 (2.5%)	4 (1.8%)
Inland Valley Daily Bulletin	1 (0.6%)	8 (3.6%)
Long Beach Press Telegram	4 (2.5%)	–
Los Angeles Times	10 (6.2%)	19 (8.6%)
Marin Independent Journal	3 (1.9%)	7 (3.2%)
Merced Sun–Star	2 (1.9%)	3 (1.4%)
Modesto Bee	9 (5.6%)	5 (2.3%)
Monterey County Herald	3 (1.9%)	3 (1.4%)
Oakland Tribune	–	1 (0.5%)
Orange County Register	4 (2.5%)	30 (13.5%)
Pasadena Star News	1 (0.6%)	4 (1.8%)
Press Telegram	–	4 (1.8%)
Record Searchlight	4 (2.5%)	5 (2.3%)
Riverside Press Enterprise	7 (4.3%)	–
Redlands Daily Facts	–	1 (0.5%)
Sacramento Bee	4 (2.5%)	6 (2.7%)
San Bernardino County Sun	3 (1.9%)	3 (1.4%)
San Diego Union Tribune	17 (10.6%)	14 (6.3%)
San Francisco Chronicle	6 (3.7%)	4 (1.8%)
San Gabriel Valley Tribune	8 (5.0%)	9 (4.1%)
San Jose Mercury News	9 (5.6%)	10 (4.5%)
San Luis Obispo Tribune	–	3 (1.4%)
Santa Barbara Independent	–	1 (0.5%)
Santa Cruz Sentinel	–	2 (0.9%)
The Californian	1 (0.6%)	4 (1.8%)
Vallejo Times Herald	4 (2.5%)	6 (2.7%)
Ventura County Star	10 (6.2%)	17 (7.7%)
Visalia Times–Delta	5 (3.1%)	6 (2.7%)
Whittier Daily News	1 (0.6%)	1 (0.5%)

## Appendix 2: Timeline

Date	Activity
July – Dec. 2011	News reports gathered
Jan. – Mar. 2012	News reports analyzed
August 2012	Baseline analysis released
Sept. 2012	San Diego forums Los Angeles forums
Oct. 2012	Making Headlines released
Nov. 2012	Two webinars on media outreach held Reporting on Health published
Dec. 2012	CNPA article printed
Jan. 2013	San Joaquin/Central Valley forum
March 2013	Superior region forum
April 2013	Sacramento media forum JACC workshop
July – Dec. 2013	News reports gathered
Sept. 2013	Truckee / Tahoe forum
Jan. – Apr. 2014	News reports analyzed
June 2014	Final analysis released