

# Suicide reports reason for 'cautious optimism'

**Bethany Ao**  
The Philadelphia Inquirer

When the pandemic lockdown led to high unemployment numbers and strict social distancing measures, public health experts warned of a coming mental health crisis. However, recent provisional data from the National Vital Statistics System published by JAMA Network showed that suicide deaths dropped 5.6% in the last year — from 47,511 in 2019 to 44,834 in 2020, providing researchers with a reason for “cautious optimism.”

The decrease would be the second in consecutive years — the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported the first drop last December, a total of 833 fewer deaths from the previous year. It was the first decline since 1999.

But while the preliminary numbers point toward a shift in the right direction, it's important to recognize that it “may not be a decrease for all groups,” said Mary Ann Murtha, director of the Philadelphia area chapter of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. The pandemic has had a disproportionate effect on some populations, she said.

“When the CDC starts to analyze the data on age, gender, race, social determinants like income levels, and did the community have the most appropriate access to health care, we will have a better view,” she said.

Preliminary studies of communities in Illinois, Connecticut, and Maryland have found a rise in suicides among Black Americans and other people of color, compared to previous years. Communities of color have borne the brunt of the pandemic — Hispanic, Black, and Native Americans are more likely to be hospitalized and to die from COVID-19 than white Americans. They have also experienced more financial hardships; reported jobless rates in February were 9.9% and 8.5% for Black and Hispanic workers, respectively, but only 5.6% for white workers.

“We're not yet sure how that will translate into suicide data,” said Rhonda Boyd, a clinical psychologist at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. “Communities of color also have trouble accessing mental health treatment, so we don't know how these groups —

Black, Latinx, Asian, and Indigenous Americans — will be affected. Hopefully more data will come out and we'll get a better picture.”

Suicide also affects children, teens, and young adults, accounting for the second-leading cause of death among Americans ages 10 to 34. Boyd pointed out that in the past few years, suicide rates among Black youth have increased. It's impossible to know the long-term consequences of the pandemic on children's mental health right now, she said.

“Kids' brains are still developing until they're 25,” Boyd said. “We don't know the impact of those missed social interactions and what they will mean in the long term. So in the meantime, we have to make sure we're taking care of our youth because they're our future. It's very important to stop the intergenerational transmission of trauma and mental health issues.”

Still, the declines are encouraging for suicide prevention organizations, said Murtha.

“We are definitely starting to feel that the work that is being done around suicide prevention in the community is starting to be recognized,” she said. “Things like putting guidance in place, offering strategies and looking for warning signs when someone is circling, educational programming we offer through workplaces and schools, that's how we break the stigma. With the pandemic came a lot of open and honest dialogue amongst our communities and with each other, and heightened awareness at the national level.”

And although the days of social distancing may be coming to an end soon as vaccination appointments are now available to anyone over age 16, it's important to continue to reach out and check on each other, Murtha said.

“We have to remind each other that it's OK to not be OK,” she said. “It's OK to reach out for help. When we go back to normal, we still have to ask open-ended caring, loving questions, like, ‘How can I help you? How are you feeling?’ We still have to make sure everybody is OK.”

If you or someone you know is thinking of suicide, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255 or text TALK to the Crisis Text Line at 741741.

# Salad fit for a goddess

**Gretchen McKay**  
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Don't you just feel like a good salad when the weather gets nice? When leaves start to appear on trees and our lawns suddenly look verdant, our dinner plates call out for a little green, too.

This salad is a great place to start. It doesn't require lots of ingredients, but it's full of flavor. The dressing is a vegan version of green goddess, named for its color. Chef Philip Roemer of San Francisco's Palace Hotel is said to have created this classic mayo-based dressing in the 1920s to honor actor George Arliss, who starred in William Archer's play “The Green Goddess.”

Like so many dishes, green goddess has gone in and out of style over the years, but this fresh, herbal version with creamy avocado, lemon, rice vinegar and three different soft and leafy herbs is a keeper. This salad is especially apropos for Earth Day, when eating more plant-based dishes is encouraged. But it's great any day!

The original recipe calls for using ‘Little Gem’ romaine lettuce, but my grocery store was out. So I substituted a mix of torn romaine and butter lettuce. For herbs, think dill, tarragon and chives along with parsley, cilantro and mint. For some extra crunch, throw on a few seasoned croutons.

## LITTLE GEM SALAD WITH GREEN GODDESS DRESSING

### For dressing

- 1/2 cup packed fresh cilantro leaves and stems
- 1/3 cup packed fresh mint leaves
- 1/2 cup packed fresh parsley leaves



Gretchen McKay/Pittsburgh Post-Gazette-TNS

Salad with green goddess dressing is heavenly.

- 1/4 cup water
- 2 large garlic cloves
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 ripe avocado, halved
- 3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 3 tablespoons unseasoned rice vinegar
- 1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/4 cup safflower or vegetable oil

### For salad

- 8 cups romaine or butter lettuce, tom, or mix of both
- 2 ripe avocados, sliced
- 5 radishes, sliced
- 1 spring onion, sliced
- Additional fresh herbs, for garnish
- Seasoned croutons, for garnish

Make dressing: Add herbs, water, garlic and salt to a blender and blend until ingredients are pureed. Next, add avocado,

lemon juice and vinegar and blitz again.

With the blender running, slowly pour in oils. Season with salt and pepper. (Dressing can be made 1 day ahead, and refrigerated. It will keep for up to a week.)

Make salad: Rinse lettuce in cold water. Shake off excess and let dry cut side down on kitchen towels or paper towels. Wrap them up in the same towel, putting the two halves together, and chill in fridge until you are ready to serve, or up to 1 day.

Arrange lettuce on a platter and drizzle with dressing. Garnish with avocado, radishes, spring onions, fresh herbs and any flowering herbs from the garden. Add a handful of croutons for extra crunch, if desired. Serves 6.

## FOLEY

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In 1894 a dam broke at Perry and the water came down into La Grande. Many houses were flooded and after the deluge the board sidewalk from the front of the old Foley House was found down on the end of Fourth Street by the railroad tracks.

Then in 1902 four drunken hobos raided the Hotel Foley kitchen and ordered the cooks to furnish them with a meal. The Observer reported: “When they were refused they used very bad language and it required force to evict them from the premises.”

“In 1903, C. H. Bidwell drove (his rig) up from Island City to meet Ed Kittle, who had come in on the evening train, and tied his horse to the chain rack in front of the Foley House. When they came out all they found was a piece of the halter attached to the chain.”

And remember J. D. McK-

ennon, who had the grocery across the street?

Well, in 1906 his delivery team “made a dash for liberty” and struck the telephone pole on the corner by the Foley House “where the horse left the rig and came very near entering the office room of the hotel.”

The hotel was so successful that in 1901 J. E. Foley constructed a two-story addition to the east which included a laundry and other needed spaces for businesses and hotel rooms. This was followed in 1904 by a larger addition to the Foley House. It was reported on Aug. 9, 1904: “J. E. Foley let the contract for a sixty foot addition to the Foley House on the east, three stories high. Also extending the addition another story that was built three years ago, making the entire structure uniform.” This added 60 more rooms to the hotel.

As the building itself grew larger the name changed

from Foley House to Foley Hotel. By 1916 the hotel was due for an update. The dining room was to be totally renovated including “very elaborate and extensive improvements ... and the whole interior will be artistically decorated.” The menu for breakfast ran 35 cents, lunch 25 cents and dinner 40 cents. In addition to the dining room there was to be a grill room which appeared to be a popular new trend.

- Room Rates in 1916:
- 1 person in room — 50 cents, 75 cents, \$1.00
  - 2 persons in room — \$1, \$1.25, \$1.50
  - Room with bath — 1 person \$1.50, \$2.00
  - Room with bath — 2 persons \$2, \$2.50

Jerome E. Foley had owned and operated the hotel for many years but he was ready to retire so, some time between 1905 and 1910, he leased the property to George Good, a hotel man from Grants Pass. In 1910 P.

A. (Pat) Foley, son of Jerome, took on the lease. When Pat decided to retire from the hotel in 1919 to pursue other businesses, it was sold to D. M. Denton of Twin Falls, Idaho. Mr. Denton, when interviewed regarding his purchase, said: “The Foley Hotel will be remodeled throughout. Work will begin very soon and we will make it first class in every particular. I am pleased to be able to invest in this city, for it is one of the best towns of its size I have ever seen, and I am convinced the future of La Grande is bright.”

Jerome E. Foley died in La Grande in October 1922 at age 72. His son Pat died in October 1933 at the age of 47 from spotted fever caused by a tick bite he received while hunting.

The hotel was bought and sold a number of times over the ensuing years. Each time there was hope of a return to the days of glory, but this didn't seem

to happen. By 1960 there were ads in the paper for rooms and apartments for rent by the week or month for \$1 per day and up. The shining star of a hotel had tarnished. Advertisements in the newspaper having a Foley Hotel address were solely for the numerous businesses on the first floor. In November 1960 the hotel was purchased by Albert Deethardt of Great Falls, Montana.

The Foley Hotel was torn down in 1971 to make way for the brick two-story General Telephone Building. Keep looking up! Enjoy!

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## DANDELION

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### FATIMA'S DANDELION SALAD

- 4 cups fresh dandelion greens
- 1/3 cup garbanzo beans
- 1/4 cup shredded cheese
- 1/3 cup each of julienned mozzarella, ham and salami
- 1/4 cup thinly sliced red onion

- 1 sliced tomato
- 3T olive oil
- 2T red wine vinegar

Options: salt, fresh ground black pepper, garlic, oregano or basil, dried parsley and fresh ground Romano cheese in proportion to your tastes.

### DANDELION SANDWICH

Consume raw leaves between slices of buttered bread, or in place of lettuce in a meat sandwich. A dash of vinegar,

Worcestershire or Tabasco sauce makes it even better.

### Garden chores

- Protect bees and other pollinating insects. Do not spray insecticide on fruit trees that are blooming.
- Most gardens need one inch of rain or water per week between April and September.

If you have garden questions or comments, email greengardencolumn@yahoo.com. Thanks for reading!

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