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## **New York is One of the First States to Receive Federal Suicide Prevention Grant**

*Columbia University TeenScreen Program  
Mental Health Check-Ups Are Part of Plan*

*Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act Awards Provide First Federal Funding  
For Youth Suicide Prevention*

**September 21, 2005 – New York, NY** – The New York State Psychiatric Institute has received \$388,803 in federal funding from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) for suicide prevention and early intervention programs. These are the first ever federal grants for suicide prevention programs. New York’s plan will target youth in juvenile justice facilities and high schools. A key component of the state’s initiative is the Columbia University TeenScreen Program, a voluntary youth mental health and suicide-risk screening program. Results of these model efforts will provide valuable information to the state’s suicide prevention plan and guidance to the other 35 states that include screening as part of their state prevention plans.

The Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act Awards are named for the son of Senator and Mrs. Gordon Smith (R-OR) who died by suicide in 2003. The Smith family’s interest in mental health screening began following Garrett’s death when their search for effective suicide prevention efforts led them to the local TeenScreen program in their hometown of Pendleton, OR. “Every dollar that helps those battling life-threatening depression brings us closer to saving our children and families,” said Sen. Smith. “Young people can be lost in the deep darkness of mental illness and these programs will help find sufferers and get them life-saving help,” added Sen. Smith.

“TeenScreen is proud to be a part of New York’s comprehensive and innovative suicide prevention plan, especially since this comes off the heels of OMH’s recommendation of TeenScreen,” said Laurie Flynn, National Director of the Columbia University TeenScreen Program.

Suicide is the third leading cause of death among young people in New York. Among high school students in New York, 14% report having thought seriously about killing themselves in the past year and 7% report having made a prior suicide attempt (CDC Youth Risk Behavior Survey 2003).

The Columbia University TeenScreen Program provides early identification of mental health problems, such as depression, that can lead to suicide. The program offers free

voluntary mental health check-ups at 424 sites in 43 states. The program was highlighted as a model program by the President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health and is listed as a promising evidence-based program by the national Suicide Prevention Resource Center. Screening tools were developed over more than a decade of research led by David Shaffer, M.D., Director of the Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at Columbia University. TeenScreen is funded by private philanthropic organizations, foundations and individuals that are committed to youth mental health. It is not affiliated with, or funded by, any pharmaceutical companies. For more information, visit [www.teenscreen.org](http://www.teenscreen.org).

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