



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Suicide threats, welfare checks remain top tips reported to Safe2Tell in May *COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact number of reports*

June 9, 2020 (DENVER, Colo.)— Suicide threats and welfare checks remained in the top categories of tips submitted to Safe2Tell in May, according to the monthly report released today.

The April report showed an increase in cyberbullying tips, causing Attorney General Phil Weiser and program Director Essi Ellis to warn parents of the increased potential for distance bullying. Moreover, welfare checks, which also increased in April, remained one of the top tips received in May. Welfare checks are usually reports that express concern about a peer. They can be suicide-related or just general concern for a peer's safety, and the tips may result in local law enforcement going to the home to do a welfare check.

“When students are not at school, they often have less frequent contact with those who might notice a safety concern. That disconnect has increased due to the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Weiser. “Peers, parents, and community members who continue reporting safety concerns to Safe2Tell can help ensure that our students are still being protected during a time when they have less contact with those who can support them during difficult times.”

The COVID-19 pandemic continued to impact tip numbers in May. The program received 875 tips, a 70% decrease in monthly tip volume compared to May 2019. To date for the 2019-2020 school year, Safe2Tell has received 19,560 tips, a 7% decrease from the 2018-2019 school year.

Suicide threats (210) remained the top tip reported to Safe2Tell in May, while welfare checks (67) remained the second-highest report after rising in April. Drugs (54), and child abuse (49) were the other top categories of tips reported to the program. Typically, reports of suicide, drugs, and bullying are the top tips reported to Safe2Tell.

Ellis said Safe2Tell historically sees fewer reports during the summer months. With prolonged social distancing, however, students may experience additional hardships and negative impacts. To address these impacts, and protect students, it is important to raise awareness that Safe2Tell remains available throughout the summer.

“As schools officially close for summer break, we remind students to continue to use Safe2Tell to submit safety concerns,” Ellis said. “The program serves as a conduit for tip information to get to trained professionals who can intervene and hopefully prevent tragedies from occurring.”

In May, anonymous tips from students and other individuals successfully helped prevent illegal activity.

For example:

- A Safe2Tell report was made about someone in danger. Police conducted a welfare check and a person was transported to a hospital.
- A Safe2Tell report was received about illegal activity at a party. Police arrived on scene and the homeowner ended the celebration and guests left the premises.

The following is an example of misuse:

- A Safe2Tell tip was received from a person wanting to report hang up phone calls from an unknown phone number.

Safe2Tell is a successful violence intervention and prevention program for students to anonymously report threats to their own, and others', safety. Safe2Tell is not an emergency response unit nor mental health counseling service provider; it is a conduit of information for distributing anonymous tips to local law enforcement and school officials, according to state law.

To make a report, individuals can call 1-877-542-7233 from anywhere, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Reports also can be made at Safe2Tell.org or through the Safe2Tell mobile app which is available on the Apple App Store or Google Play.

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