

**Medical Director's Report
Board of Health
August 2010**

Suicide Prevention

I reviewed a report drafted by a consulting group to Cornell looking at the gorge deaths of the recent years. Discussed the same with Dr. Janet Corson-Rikert of Cornell Health Clinic.

The basic issues are that most suicides are an impulsive act on the part of the individual and that convenience and unimpeded access are factors in the successful completion of a suicide attempt. If the impulsive act is thwarted, many of these individuals go on to live their lives without a suicide fatality.

The group concludes that given the fact that the gorges have become a somewhat "iconic" place for suicides, that impeding the impulsive act through the use of barriers is a logical step to be taken. This point of view is consistent with commonplace experience in the medical treatment of suicide gestures and depression. It is also consistent with the treatment of acute adjustment disorders of adolescents and young adults.

While suicides cannot be fully prevented if the individual is determined, the use of barriers can hold out the hope of saving a life or more.