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## **Inaugural U.S. National Water Safety Action Plan Unveiled to Combat One of the Top Causes of Death for Adults and Children**

### **Action Plan will act as national roadmap for collective action to reduce drowning in United States**

*Plan Will Transform Water Safety in U.S. and Save Lives., Now and for Generations to Come*

(Washington, DC, June 29, 2023) – In an effort to address one of the top causes of death among adults and children in the United States, the inaugural U.S. National Water Safety Action Plan (USNWSAP) was released today to unite communities and help put an end to preventable drowning tragedies.

The report marks the culmination of four years of volunteer activity amongst drowning prevention experts from across the country to develop the first-ever U.S. National Water Safety Action Plan – an important step toward turning the tide of drowning. The Plan lays out a framework for a coordinated approach to address drowning, a major public health issue resulting in the loss of an average of 11 people every day and countless nonfatal drowning incidents.

“The Plan envisions a United States where everyone is safe in, on, and around water,” said Morag MacKay, chair of the USNWSAP Steering Committee. “To get there, the plan calls for targeted collaboration and coordination of efforts, and equitable implementation of what we know works at the state, county and community levels.”

Given the diversity of water environments across the country, the USNWSAP introduces a flexible 12-step process that encourages jurisdictions to start by identifying existing water hazards and preventive efforts and to use that base to develop data- and evidence-informed context-specific action plans. To support planning efforts, the USNWSAP lays out 99 evidence-informed action recommendations addressing policy and legislative change, organizational change, education and training, and public awareness.

Recognizing the importance of equity, the USNWSAP also acknowledges the existing disparities in drowning rates and the social factors that have contributed to them, such as race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, disability and geographic location. Jurisdictions are encouraged to consider changes to public health and safety delivery systems to address disparities and ensure equitable access to preventive interventions.

Another key component of the USNWSAP is national implications – actions at a national level that will support uptake and implementation of recommendations at the state, county, and community levels. These actions include the development of national minimum standards, advocacy toolkits with model laws, and national-level guidance related to improving drowning data. Undertaking the development of these standards, tools, and

resources and encouraging their use will help address existing inequities between and within states, counties, and communities.

The USNWSAP covers a 10-year period from 2023 to 2032 and focuses on six key areas where evidence supports effective action: Barriers, Entrapment, and Electrical Safety; Data and Public Health Surveillance; Life Jackets, Personal Flotation Devices, and Other Flotation; Rescue and CPR; Lifeguards and Supervision; and Water Safety, Water Competency, and Swimming Lessons. These areas encompass a range of prevention strategies to reduce drowning incidents and improve water safety nationwide.

For more information about the U.S. National Water Safety Action Plan and to access the complete list of action recommendations, please visit [watersafetyplan.us](https://watersafetyplan.us).

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### **About the U.S. National Water Safety Action Plan**

The process for creating the USNWSAP was initiated and facilitated by Water Safety USA and was led by a Steering Committee of experts in water safety and drowning prevention. The strength of the USNWSAP is the accumulated knowledge and expertise of those who participated in its development. For a full list of all contributors, visit [watersafetyplan.us](https://watersafetyplan.us)

### **About the U.S. National Water Safety Action Plan Steering Committee Members:**

American Academy of Pediatrics: <https://www.aap.org>

American Red Cross: <https://www.redcross.org>

Boy Scouts of America: <https://www.scouting.org>

Make the Minute Matter

NDPA: <https://ndpa.org>

Safe Kids WorldWide: <https://www.safekids.org>

The ZAC Foundation: <https://thezacfoundation.org>

YMCA of the USA: <https://www.ymca.org>