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**Suicide Prevention Action Network USA Provides Federal  
Legislative Update Regarding Suicide Prevention Policies**

***Public Policy and Program Director Demonstrates Internet as  
Grassroots Tool for Implementing Suicide Prevention Policies***

**JEFFERSON CITY, Mo., September 11, 2007** — Brian Altman, director of public policy and program development for the Suicide Prevention Action Network USA, today spoke about the status of federal legislation regarding suicide prevention and how to use the Internet as an advocacy tool at a suicide prevention conference in Missouri. National Suicide Prevention Week began Sunday, Sept. 9, 2007 and runs through Saturday, Sept. 15, 2007.

“Because of the legislation moving through Congress – and because of the great work being done by advocates across the country – we’re making significant strides in advancing public policies to help prevent suicide,” Altman said. “But more work remains to be done to increase awareness about this preventable public health problem.”

Altman noted the vast impact Internet advocacy tools have had on public policy over the last few years, allowing people from various locations to engage with their representatives at the local, state and federal level to effect change issues that are important to them. He also described the tools available at SPAN USA’s Legislative and Media Action Center (<http://capwiz.com/spanusa/home/>) – from finding out the latest news in Congress to connecting with legislators to pitching local media on suicide prevention efforts.

Altman noted the progress being made on several of SPAN USA’s legislative priorities:

- **Reauthorization of the Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act** (S. 1514, H.R. 2511): Provides three types of grants to aid youth suicide prevention efforts at the state, tribal and campus levels.
- **Stop Senior Suicide Act** (S. 1854): Bill to help prevent suicide among older adults through improving the integration of mental health services to older adults, funding older adult suicide prevention and intervention programs, providing technical assistance to grantees and improving Medicare coverage of mental health.

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- **Paul Wellstone Mental Health and Addiction Equity Act of 2007** (H.R. 1424) and **Mental Health Parity Act of 2007** (S. 558): Mental health parity bills to allow more people to receive equitable insurance coverage for mental health and addiction recovery services.
- **Joshua Omvig Veterans Suicide Prevention Act** (S. 479, H.R. 327): Legislation that directs the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to develop and implement a comprehensive program to reduce the incidence of suicide among veterans, make available 24-hour mental health care for veterans, and develop an outreach and education program for veterans and their families.

**NOTE: To interview Brian Altman, please contact Melanie Fonder at (202) 715-1568 or [melanie.fonder@dittus.com](mailto:melanie.fonder@dittus.com).**

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*SPAN USA is the nation's only suicide prevention organization dedicated to leveraging grassroots support among suicide survivors and others to advance public policies that prevent suicide. Since its founding in 1996, SPAN USA has led the drive to make suicide a public health priority by building political will and calling for the development and implementation of a national strategy for suicide prevention. Using its extensive grassroots network of survivors and advocates, SPAN USA has actively promoted the cause on Capitol Hill and in state legislatures. For more information, please visit [www.spanusa.org](http://www.spanusa.org).*

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