



SAMHSA and Vibrant Joint Press Release

SAMHSA Awards Vibrant Emotional Health the Grant to Administer 988 Dialing Code for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

988 Available to All Americans in July 2022

Wednesday, June 16, 2021 – The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) today announced Vibrant Emotional Health (Vibrant) will be the administrators of the new 988 dialing code for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (Lifeline). A pair of the agency’s grants, totaling \$48 million and including \$32 million in Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021 funding, will fund the effort to better harness technology to help Americans in mental health crisis and save more lives. Vibrant, in partnership with SAMHSA, has administered the Lifeline since its creation in 2005. This funding also supports the national Disaster Distress Helpline, a subnetwork of the Lifeline.

“The need for quick, easy and reliable access to emotional support and crisis counselling has never been greater. The COVID-19 pandemic laid bare the stressors faced by Americans; too often, such stressors result in suicidal and mental health crises,” said Tom Coderre, Acting Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use and the interim head of SAMHSA. “These grants will work to expand the nation’s call centers’ capacity and technological readiness as the Lifeline’s shift to 988 becomes operational next summer. Until that launch, we ask anyone who needs help or who has a loved one at risk of suicide to call or chat with Lifeline operators at 1-800-273-8255.”

“This national three-digit phone number, 988, will be a step towards a more equitable and accessible mental health safety net in this country,” said Kimberly Williams, President and CEO of Vibrant Emotional Health. “We look forward to continuing our partnership with SAMHSA to bring life-saving mental and emotional health support to all Americans.”

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) designated 988 as the new three-digit number for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline on July 16, 2020. The U.S. Senate passed the National Suicide Hotline Designation Act (S. 2661), establishing 988, in May 2020, and the U.S. House of Representatives passed the legislation in September 2020. The National Suicide Hotline Designation Act of 2020 was signed into law on October 17, 2020. The requirement for phone service providers to transition to 988 as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline will take effect on July 16, 2022.

The grants follow strides made by the Biden administration in dedicating funding to safeguarding the nation’s mental health: President Joe Biden’s Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 budget, announced last month, allots SAMHSA \$180 million to fund its suicide prevention programs, an increase of \$78 million over FY 2021 enacted. To ensure the Lifeline is prepared for the 988 transition, the President’s budget plan invests \$102 million in the program, an increase of \$78 million over FY 2021 enacted. Also last month, HHS announced \$1.5 billion in American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 funding would go to the Community Mental Health Services Block Grant

(MHBG) aiding states and territories. In March, SAMHSA announced a supplemental \$825 million for the preceding MHBG, part of the Biden administration's ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Until the formal launch of 988, anyone in mental health crisis or emotional distress should continue to call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-275-TALK (8255). Vibrant is working with the Lifeline network of over 180 crisis centers and other stakeholders to prepare for the nationwide launch next summer. Some carriers have been able to activate 988 before July 2022. Those interested in learning more about early activation should contact the individual carriers for additional information.

About SAMHSA

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is the agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that leads public health efforts to advance the behavioral health of the nation. SAMHSA's mission is to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on America's communities. To that end, it funds billions of dollars in grants that enable states, territories and tribes to address behavioral health needs at the community level. SAMHSA also operates public-facing treatment locators and helplines to help connect Americans to needed services and support. People searching for treatment for mental or substance use disorders can find it by visiting <https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov> or by calling SAMHSA's National Helpline, 1-800-662-HELP (4357).

About Vibrant Emotional Health

Vibrant Emotional Health is a non-profit organization that helps individuals and families achieve emotional wellbeing. For over 50 years, our groundbreaking solutions have delivered high-quality services and support, when, where and how people need it. We offer confidential emotional support through our state-of-the-art contact center and crisis hotline services that use leading edge telephone, text and web-based technologies and include the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, NFL Life Line and NYC Well. Through our community wellness programs individuals and families obtain supports and skills they need to thrive. Our advocacy and education initiatives promote mental wellbeing as a social responsibility. Each year we help more than 2.5 million people live healthier and more vibrant lives. We're advancing access, dignity and respect for all and revolutionizing the system for good. Visit vibrant.org. And follow Vibrant on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

About the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

Funded by SAMHSA and administered by Vibrant Emotional Health, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is a leader in suicide prevention and mental health crisis care. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline provides free and confidential emotional support and crisis counseling to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States. Callers who follow the "press 1" prompt are connected to the Veterans Crisis Line. A Spanish Language line is available at 1-888-628-9454, and more than 150 languages are supported through a Tele-Interpreters service. The Lifeline comprises a national network of more than 180 local crisis centers, uniting local resources with national best practices. Since its inception in 2005, the Lifeline has engaged in innovative public messaging, development of best practices in mental health, creative partnerships, and more to improve crisis services and advance suicide prevention for all. suicidepreventionlifeline.org

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