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## **HOPE HAS A NEW NUMBER**

### **988 Becomes National Access Code for Anyone Needing Mental Health Support**

#### **Unprecedented Expansion of Crisis Center Network for Suicide Prevention**

**NEW YORK, NY (July 15, 2022)** – Vibrant Emotional Health (Vibrant), the nonprofit administrator of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, is thrilled to announce the momentous transition of the line to become the [988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](https://www.988lifeline.org) (988 Lifeline), with a new, easy to remember three-digit access code, 9-8-8.

On Saturday, July 16, 2022, anyone experiencing suicidal, substance use and other mental health crises will be able to reach a trained crisis counselor by calling or texting 9-8-8 and chat is available at [988lifeline.org](https://www.988lifeline.org). The 988 Lifeline serves as a universal entry point to this free, confidential service, which is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. No matter where a person lives in the United States or its territories, a trained crisis counselor will respond.

“Hope has a new number and it is 9-8-8,” said Kimberly Williams, President & CEO of Vibrant. “This historic transition to 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline will promote help seeking and increase awareness and accessibility to this life-saving resource. The 988 Lifeline is a vital mental health safety net for all in this country.”

Numerous evaluations by independent research teams have shown that the 988 Lifeline centers are effective in reducing the emotional distress and suicidality of persons contacting their service.

Funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the 988 Lifeline is a national network of over 200 locally operated and funded crisis centers across the country, offering support to people in emotional distress and suicidal crisis since 2005. The network is designed to route calls through a national number to local centers; as well as ensure a robust national backup network to support the contacts that are unable to be answered in-state.

Since answering 46,000 calls in its first year in 2005, the network’s capacity and reach has grown to over 3.6 million phone, text and chat contacts in 2021.

As the administrator of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline since its inception, and now the administrator of the 988 Lifeline, Vibrant has long championed the need to enhance capacity and infrastructure for the Lifeline, recognizing it historically has been under-resourced and underfunded for many years.

In 2021, SAMHSA announced over \$282 million in investments for 988 implementation (and another \$150 million announced in 2022). \$177 million of the 2021 funds were made available to Vibrant as the administrator of the Lifeline. These funds are now being used to fund crisis centers in the Lifeline network, which includes the national backup network, chat and text network, and a Spanish subnetwork, as well as the continued development of the infrastructure and services needed to support 988.

These timely investments have resulted in a substantial increase in the number of answered calls, chats, and texts, even while volume has increased. There have been significant improvements in just the past few months, as Vibrant has expanded its support for national back up centers in preparation for the 988 launch. In June 2022, tens of thousands of additional people in crisis received life-saving support, as the Lifeline network answered nearly 50,000 more phone, text and chat contacts than in June 2021.

“While local crisis centers are the heart and soul of the Lifeline network, it is critical that we have back-up support for areas of the country that do not have sufficient local capacity to answer all Lifeline calls, texts or chats,” said Dr. John Draper, Chief 988 Lifeline Officer for Vibrant. “This unprecedented increase in resources for centers providing these national back-up services builds a stronger Lifeline overall, and ensures that anyone who is in emotional distress or suicidal crisis is connected to a counselor in the moments they need help most.”

This network expansion is the largest single expansion of capacity in Lifeline's history, growing the number of crisis centers offering nationalized services and increasing workforce capacity and response for phone, chat and text services. Lifeline backup and nationalized services are an important and proven component of ensuring a mental health safety net, particularly when there are demand surges. While meeting these surges in the past, this expansion will help to meet the growing demand for these services.

Over the coming year, funding will also be used to establish outreach, partnerships, and services for enhancing access to crisis care for historically marginalized populations at higher risk of suicide, including LGBTQ+ youth, persons from Indigenous, Black and Brown communities, as well as persons with functional disabilities.

With this expansion, workforce recruitment, hiring and training at the centers is ongoing. Anyone interested in working for a local crisis center, can find more information here: <https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/988/jobs>

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#### **Editor's Note:**

The current 10-digit National Suicide Prevention Lifeline number 1-800-273-TALK (8255) will continue to be operational after July 16 and will route calls to 988 Lifeline indefinitely. Veterans, service members, and their families can still reach the Veterans Crisis Line with the current phone number 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1, or by [chat](#) or text to 838255.

**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, including the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, NFL Life Line and NYC Well. Through our community wellness programs individuals and families obtain the 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](https://vibrant.org). And follow Vibrant on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

**About the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (formerly the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline)**

Funded by SAMHSA and administered by Vibrant Emotional Health, the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline (988 Lifeline) is a leader in suicide prevention and mental health crisis care. The 988 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 by pressing 2 when calling 9-8-8, and more than 240 languages are supported through a Tele-Interpreters service. The Lifeline is comprised of a national network of more than 200 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. [988lifeline.org](https://988lifeline.org)