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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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June 21, 2022

New 988 Lifeline Number to Launch July 16, 2022

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) in partnership with the Federal Communications Commission and the Department of Veterans Affairs, are moving to a 3-digit dialing code as a way to strengthen and expand the existing National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.

Beginning July 16, 2022, people can access the Lifeline via 988 or by the 10-digit number (which will not go away).

988 is more than just an easy-to-remember number—it is a direct connection to compassionate, accessible care and support for anyone experiencing mental health related distress – whether that is thoughts of suicide, mental health or substance use crisis, or any other kind of emotional distress.

988 is a first step towards a transformed crisis care system in much the same way as emergency medical services have expanded in the US. It is focused on strengthening and expanding the existing Lifeline network, providing life-saving service to all who call, text or chat via 988. In the longer term, the linking those in crisis to community-based providers—who can deliver a full range of crisis care services— is essential to meeting crisis needs across the nation.

The Lifeline encompasses a national network of over 200 local, independent, and state-funded crisis centers equipped to help people in emotional distress or experiencing a suicidal crisis. Moving to 988 **will not** replace the Lifeline, rather it will be an easier way to access a strengthened and expanded network of crisis call centers.

Continued

Our mission is to prevent substance abuse in our community by providing educational programs for healthcare professionals, educators, parents, students, and seniors.

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The 988 dialing code will be available nationwide for call (multiple languages), text or chat (English only) on July 16, 2022. Until then, those experiencing a mental health or suicide-related crisis, or those helping a loved one through crisis, should continue to reach the Lifeline at its current number, 1-800-273-8255.

The Lifeline accepts calls from anyone who needs support for a suicidal, mental health and/or substance use crisis.

New Jersey residents who wish to obtain additional information on the launch of 988 Lifeline should visit the State’s website at <https://nj.gov/humanservices/dmhas/initiatives/988/>

Wellspring Center for Prevention provides substance abuse prevention, education, information, and referral services to county residents, businesses, schools, faith-based organizations, municipal alliances, and social service agencies since 1980. Our mission is to promote the health and well-being of individuals, families, and communities through the prevention of addiction-related problems across the lifespan. Additional information is available at <https://wellspringprevention.org/>.