Scaling Up Crisis Call Center Services and State-Center Partnerships in the Context of National Crisis Service Growth

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National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
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The Lifeline Mission

To effectively reach and serve all persons who could be at risk of suicide in the United States through a national network of crisis call centers.
The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is a network of independently operated, independently funded local and state call centers. The Lifeline is not one large national call center.

- SAMHSA’s Lifeline grant is administered by Vibrant Emotional Health in New York City.
Now, and if a national three digit number for suicide crisis is established in the near future, callers deserve to:

a) have their calls answered,
b) have their calls answered quickly,
c) have their calls answered with linkages to relevant local services,
d) have their calls answered in accordance with the best possible standards in suicide crisis care.
e) have their calls answered within a system of care that ensures backup centers can answer if an initial call center is unable to answer.

This is the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline NOW. Call volume is increasing and capacity must continue to expand.
Lifeline-member call centers in your states do much more...

- 80% of Lifeline call centers report initiate follow up calls as part of their crisis services.
- 79% of Lifeline call centers report promoting awareness on social media.
- 71% offer support services for suicide loss survivors.
- 99% of Lifeline call centers report being active in local community events.

Based on Lifeline’s 2018 member survey.
Lifeline-member centers’ incorporation of best practices

- 86% of Lifeline centers applied Lifeline best practices to most or all of their crisis services.
- 64% of these crisis centers incorporate Lifeline best practices in all of their center crisis services.
- 38% of Lifeline centers make use of the Lifeline Simulation Training System on a regular basis.

Based on Lifeline’s 2018 member survey
How many times during the period July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018 did Lifeline crisis call centers inform / educate local mental health and suicide prevention stakeholders in their community about Lifeline’s "best practices?"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Center Funding Level</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Total Times</th>
<th>Per Center Avg.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$1.7M to $25M</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>359</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$650K to $1.7M</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>454</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$245K to $650K</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$0 to $245K</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>1,367</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on Lifeline’s 2018 member survey
• In 2005, the first year that the Lifeline operated, we answered just over 46,000 calls.

• Over 2.2 million calls were answered in 2018
  • 639,063 of those were veterans-related calls routed to the Veterans Crisis Line.

• Over 14 million calls have been answered since 2005. As the Lifeline is currently structured, we expect nearly 12 million more calls answered in next 4-5 years

  • A three-digit national number will likely increase call volume significantly, with over 13 million potential calls –annually- within 5 years of implementation (Lifeline estimate)
Lifeline Call Volume and Projections even without a national 3 digit number

Call volumes have increased consistently year over year.

Note: “short abandons” (callers who hang up in under 30 seconds, prior to completion of greeting) not included here.
Lifeline member call centers in your states - Gain/loss of private/public dollars (FY18 vs. FY 17)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Private</th>
<th>Public</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>34.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.1%</td>
<td>-14.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-1.1%</td>
<td>-2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-0.1%</td>
<td>-0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-1.2%</td>
<td>-0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

77 centers provided information concerning the source of their FY17 to FY18 funding change.
Call center funding Levels and Lifeline Calls (FY18)

- Large volume, higher funding level call centers do a great deal for the Lifeline network....but medium size, medium budget call centers answer the largest percent of Lifeline calls.

- These centers are critical to the future of the network and, most likely, to the implementation of a national three digit number for suicide crisis response.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding Level</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Total Funding</th>
<th>% All Funding</th>
<th>Lifeline Calls</th>
<th>% Lifeline Calls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$1.7M to $25M</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>$177,967,588</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>376,597</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$650K to $1.7M</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>$29,347,855</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>352,776</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$245K to $650K</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>$11,182,991</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>253,664</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$0 to $245K</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>$3,717,837</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>177,487</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>110</td>
<td><strong>$222,216,271</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,160,524</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The movement towards a possible national 3-digit number for suicide crisis response...

Signed into law August 14, 2018

Purpose:

- Study feasibility and impact of national 3-digit dialing code (N-1-1) for mental health and suicidal crisis
- Study the effectiveness of the Lifeline and 3 digit numbers
- Recommend a possible number
- Explore costs and benefits of such a national 3-digit system
• By Feb 2019, SAMHSA and the VA submitted their reports to the FCC.

• Subsequently, feedback from the North American Numbering Council and extensive public comment was reviewed.

• SAMHSA recommended 3-digit, with vital funding supports noted. VA was silent on recommendations, noting their efficacy.

• SAMHSA recommended 3-digit because:
  • “Cognitive access”: easier to recall and dial in crisis state
  • Lifeline is effective in reducing distress/suicidality. Serve more, save more.
  • Divert unnecessary calls from 911, law enforcement and emergency services
  • Could transform crisis care systems nationally.

• Public comment overwhelming also recommended 3 digit.
In August 2019, the FCC released its report:

**A 3-digit code is needed**

“...we find that the Lifeline has been effective, including in addressing the needs of Veterans. However, based on the SAMHSA Report as well as comments filed in the record, we also find that the Lifeline could be more effective in preventing suicides and providing crisis intervention if it were accessible via a simple, easy-to-remember, 3-digit dialing code.”

FCC Report, 8/14/2019
A recommendation to move forward with a 3-digit “988” number

Suicide prevention hotline to get three-digit phone number

FCC chairman says he will move ahead following legislation, staff report

“Ajit Pai, Chair, FCC, Report to Congress, 8/14/2019

“Crisis Centers save lives.... Increasing the convenience and immediacy of access to a national suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline via a 3-digit dialing code will therefore help spread a proven, effective intervention. In short, we believe that designating the 988 code for a national suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline system is highly likely to lower suicide mortality risk in the United States....and thus that the benefits of this action are quite likely to outweigh the costs.”
Reps. Chris Stewart (R-UT) & Seth Moulton (D-MA) introduced Bill 8/20/19

• 988 designation for mental health & suicide prevention nationally, wireless and landline, within a year of Bill passage

• Operating through the Lifeline and VCL, maintained by SAMHSA & VA

• State authority to charge cell phone/IP carrier customers to fund 988 services

• 988 Geolocation capabilities (for cell phone location routing and call trace) feasibility study completed within 180 days of Bill passage
Another Bill, current being drafted

John Katko (R-NY) & Don Beyer (D-VA)
(Not released, not titled as of yet)

• Will set performance indicators for service at local centers and national back-ups for:
  • Call response
  • Follow-up services
• Will include periodic QI-testing, monitoring
• QI Plan received by and implemented through SAMHSA within a year of Bill passage
• $50m to centers annually to implement and perform to standards (efforts are underway to increase funding level)
Next Steps and Issues to Be Addressed

- Confirmed 3-digit designation
- Support network infrastructure
  - funding for states and local centers
  - performance indicators/QA
  - technology platform for system
- Technical needs to implement 3-digit code across phone carriers and systems nationally (FCC estimates less than $300 million in one time costs)
- Marketing of new number (FCC estimates $125 million each year for the first 2 years)
Over the last 5 years, 28 centers have joined the NSPL (January 2015 – September 2019).

- 19 of the 28 centers joined in the last 1.5 years
- 4 new centers are estimated to join by end of 2019.
- New centers will be poised to benefit from expanded capacity-building funding opportunities likely to come with a national 3-digit number.
Our state level reports overview call volume and center trends

- Latest semi-annual reports for commissioners will be released in the near future.
- The Lifeline and the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention are releasing additional reports aimed at educating suicide prevention stakeholders and advocates.
Some ‘capacity keys’ for a three digit numbers and your state

Even when (non-Lifeline) county/regional lines are widely promoted, thousands of individuals still call the Lifeline every day from across the U.S. and your state.

- Having more of these existing county/regional lines join the Lifeline is one key to the puzzle of meeting the nation’s future capacity needs.

- Another key is expanding the capacity of current Lifeline-affiliated call centers. (n=172)

  - Example: Sept/Oct 2019 up to $10 million in Lifeline 2-year state capacity building grant awards be announced.

- Another key is stronger collaboration between call centers and state mental health agencies.
Thank You

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To learn more about the Lifeline network, or to encourage your state’s call center to join, visit: https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/our-network/