

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 14, 2023

Donna Harrell

310-795-7232

[donna@linesforlife.org](mailto:donna@linesforlife.org)

## LINES FOR LIFE MARKS ONE YEAR ANSWERING 988 CALLS, TEXTS, CHATS

The nationwide 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline has been active nationwide since July 16, 2022, and is reaching thousands more Oregonians than ever before with compassionate support for people in crisis.

Getting help in crisis has never been easier – you can now reach help by calling or texting 988, thanks to the new service launched one year ago.

“More Oregonians than ever before are reaching out with the new Suicide & Crisis Lifeline,” Dwight Holton, the CEO of Lines for Life reported. “988 is already helping people get help for crisis by reducing stigma,” Holton explained. “No one is embarrassed to call 911 when there’s a police or fire emergency – with 988, we’re delivering the message that it’s okay to struggle and it’s ok to get help.”

In the first year of service, Lines for Life has answered over 40,000 calls to 988, and over 10,000 texts and chats. This represents growth of over 33% compared to the previous service’s annual contact volume – the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.

Lines for Life is delivering fast, effective support for people in crisis – with an average wait time of 15 seconds once a call reaches the call center.

Lines for Life’s highly trained call counselors de-escalate nearly 97% of calls from people in crisis without resorting to emergency services, law enforcement or other first responders – delivering safe and compassionate support.

When people require in-person support, Lines for Life works with Oregon’s Community Mental Health Programs to dispatch mobile crisis intervention teams. Growing capacity for mobile crisis intervention is a priority for Oregon, especially for reaching rural and frontier communities.

The State of Oregon has also begun design for a system of crisis stabilization for people struggling with more acute crisis. Once this system is fully operational, the 988 call center will act as “care traffic control,” for supporting people in crisis, alongside mobile crisis response and crisis stabilization providers to meet more acute need.

Lines for Life has answered the nation’s Lifeline for many years and helps lead efforts to build and expand the new 988 service in Oregon. Lines for Life is a regional nonprofit dedicated to preventing substance abuse and suicide and promoting mental wellness, founded in 1993. The organization operates several helplines, as well as offering prevention and training programs around these topics and more.

As the state of Oregon marks one year of service for the 988 Lifeline, Oregon is taking significant steps to enhance mental health crisis services statewide. On the last day of the 2023 legislative session, Oregon lawmakers passed a bill – co-sponsored by Representatives Tawna Sanchez and Rob Nosse – to fund and expand 988 call centers and mobile crisis response services. Experts are calling this bill one of the most significant pieces of suicide prevention legislation in the state’s history.

Lines for Life expects contact volume to continue to grow as more people become familiar and comfortable with calling, texting, and chatting 988 for support. The organization also acts as a backup center for nationwide calls to the 988 Lifeline when other centers in the network are experiencing high volume.