

For Immediate Release

April 24, 2026

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Lines for Life Responds to JAMA Study Finding 988 Linked to Nearly 4,400 Fewer Youth Suicide Deaths

Oregon 988 Provider Calls Study a Rare Moment in Public Health

PORTLAND, Ore. — An important new study has found dramatic decreases in suicide, especially youth suicide, tied to the launch of the new 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline. Published in the **Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)**, the study found that 4,372 fewer U.S. teens and young adults died by suicide than projected in the first two and a half years following its launch — a reduction of 11%.

Lines for Life, the Oregon-based nonprofit home to 988 for most of Oregon, celebrated the impact of 988 in helping reduce suicides.

"This is one of those rare moments in public health where we can say that something might actually be working," said lead author Dr. Vishal Patel of Harvard Medical School and Brigham and Women's Hospital. For Lines for Life, those words carry deep meaning.

"We have always known that when people reach out for help, they find hope," said **Dwight Holton, CEO of Lines for Life**. "988 was designed to put that connection within reach of anyone who needs it, with an easy to remember, easy to use number. And now we see the results — real reductions in suicide."

"This study underscores the importance of policy makers in Oregon fully funding 988," said **Chris Bouneff, Executive Director of the Oregon Chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness**. "The 988 hotline is reducing suicide deaths in all age groups, but especially for youth."

Data Makes an Urgent Case for Broader Marketing

The study also showed states with higher usage of 988 had larger reductions in suicide. Oregon recently launched a statewide marketing campaign to advertise the 988 service. "The JAMA study makes an urgent case for greater state investment in marketing 988 — because when people use 988, we see fewer suicide deaths," Holton said.

About the Study

Published this week, the research letter, authored by Dr. Patel, Dr. Michael Liu, and Dr. Anupam Jena, analyzed nationwide death certificate data from 1999 through 2022 to project what youth

suicide mortality would have looked like without 988. Comparing those projections to actual deaths between July 2022 and December 2024, researchers found a striking and sustained gap. The reductions were sharpest among those ages 15 to 23, a population Lines for Life has long worked to reach through its YouthLine, a peer-to-peer crisis line operated by trained youth volunteers out of call centers in Portland, Bend, Warm Springs, and most recently, Hawai'i.

At Lines for Life, suicide crisis call volume has surged since 988 was launched. In the year before 988, Lines for Life took 39,785 calls on the national suicide line. This year, Lines for Life expects to receive nearly 80,000 contacts on the Oregon 988 line, doubling volume in just three years.

The Evidence Is Compelling

The JAMA study found strong geographic evidence of 988's impact. States with the largest increases in call volumes saw an 18% reduction in youth suicide deaths, significantly greater than the 11% seen in states with the smallest usage increases.

Oregon has been a national leader in supporting 988, fully funding Oregon's two 988 call centers with a small, dedicated tax on phone lines.

"988 puts an easy way for people to reach out for help on their worst day," Holton said. "And we know when people reach out for help, they find hope — over 95% of our contacts are resolved without emergency services."

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About Lines for Life

Based in Portland, Oregon, Lines for Life is a nonprofit dedicated to preventing substance abuse and suicide and promoting mental wellness. Our work addresses a spectrum of needs including intervention, prevention, and advocacy. Learn more at [linesforlife.org](https://www.linesforlife.org).