



COMING IN 2022!

988 - The New Behavioral Health Crisis Number WILL FLORIDA BE READY?

WHAT IS 9-8-8?

On October 17, 2020, President Trump signed S.2661, the National Suicide Hotline Designation Act of 2020, which created a new number, 9-8-8, as a universal telephone number for national suicide prevention and a mental health crisis hotline system.

By July 16, 2022, 9-8-8 will be activated across the U.S. At that time, all Florida residents who use 9-8-8 for assistance with suicide prevention and behavioral health emergencies will be directed by telecommunications companies to Florida’s 12 National Suicide Prevention Lifelines (NSPL).

WHAT DOES FLORIDA NEED TO DO TO PREPARE?

Every state must establish a plan to implement the new 9-8-8 number by strengthening the capacity of its National Suicide Prevention Lifeline call centers. Florida’s 12 NSPL centers do not have sufficient staffing or resources to respond to the increased volume expected when 988 goes into effect. This issue must be resolved to avoid calls going unanswered or transferred to centers outside the state.

It is also vital that Florida prepares its Lifeline centers to work in concert with community behavioral health services, such as mobile response teams and centralized receiving facilities, to ensure that Florida residents in crisis receive a prompt and appropriate response to behavioral health emergencies.

AN OPPORTUNITY TO INTERVENE EARLY AND EFFECTIVELY

The introduction of 9-8-8 is an opportunity for Florida to strengthen its overall crisis response system. Because people are linked to services and treated the first time they call 988, money is saved from repeated hospitalizations and other acute care services. Calls that would normally be received at 9-1-1 call centers will be diverted to 9-8-8, relieving law enforcement agencies from responding to the vast majority of behavioral health crises. At the same time, 9-1-1 can still be used to bring a law enforcement response in high-risk situations. Lives will be saved!

3 KEY COMPONENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE CRISIS RESPONSE SYSTEM

NSPL LIFELINE CALL CENTERS

Someone to Talk To

Well-trained call-takers can effectively handle mental health, substance use, and suicidal crises, including by text and chat.

Call-takers can refer callers to behavioral health providers for follow-up services.

Call-takers can send a mobile response team to address needs on-site.

MOBILE RESPONSE TEAMS

Someone To Respond

When an on-site response to a crisis is needed, Mobile Response Teams, staffed by trained professionals and peers, can be deployed, using geolocation where possible.

Mobile response teams can de-escalate situations, arrange transportation to crisis stabilization, or connect people to services.

CRISIS STABILIZATION SERVICES

A Place To Go

Individuals in crisis can receive short-term (23 hour) stabilization services and be assessed at Centralized Receiving Facilities or other crisis stabilization centers.

Once stabilized, individuals can be linked to services in the community through the local Care Coordination system, avoiding the cost of repeated trauma and crises.



9-8-8 Q & A

Is 9-8-8 a Florida number?

NO. 988 will be active as a nationwide call number by July 16, 2022.

Will 9-8-8 replace 9-1-1?

NO. 9-1-1 will still be the number to call for most emergencies, such as reporting a crime in progress, a fire, or requesting an ambulance.

9-8-8 will be used for behavioral health and suicide calls, thus relieving 9-1-1 of about 20% of their current calls and filling a gap in behavioral health crisis services that has existed since de-institutionalization.

9-8-8 will provide a *behavioral health response* for behavioral health crises.

Will 9-8-8 replace 2-1-1?

NO. 2-1-1 offers vital community referrals to help people find food, shelters, healthcare, pay their bills, get help from disasters like hurricanes, apply for benefits, etc.

The majority of 2-1-1 call centers in Florida are also National Suicide Prevention Lifelines (NSPL), so they will receive both 2-1-1 and 9-8-8 calls.

How do we pay for 9-8-8?

Florida's NSPL call centers have already received a small planning grant, but many will need additional funds for staffing and infrastructure, as they are expecting a minimum increase in calls of 300%.



Florida's mobile response teams and crisis stabilization centers must also be able to meet capacity. DCF's Office for Suicide Prevention oversees a 9-8-8 Planning Coalition that will help identify diversified funding that might include federal mental health block grants.

Some states (Utah, Washington, Georgia) have created funding streams to support their 988 crisis/access call systems.

How will 9-8-8 save money?

Expensive hospitalizations will be avoided, because 9-8-8 will link callers to behavioral health services in the community when possible.

Most calls (up to 85%) will be handled on the phone (or text or chat) thus saving the cost of sending crisis-care workers to the home.

Most importantly, suicides will be prevented and those needing behavioral health treatment will get help the first time they call, avoiding repeated trauma, hospitalizations, incarcerations, and homelessness.

The 9-8-8 Advocacy Group

The 9-8-8- Advocacy Group is a coalition of organizations that support building a comprehensive behavioral health crisis response system throughout Florida in conjunction with the implementation of the 9-8-8 crisis call line.



Florida Mental Health Advocacy Coalition
5205 Greenwood Avenue, Suite 110 - West Palm Beach, FL 33407
Contact: Gayle Giese, President - gayle@flmhac.org - www.flmhac.org