

OHIO SUICIDE PREVENTION FOUNDATION

Making the Life Saving Switch to 988

It's been 54 years since 911 made its debut as the universal emergency number for police, fire, and medic. Now, thanks to a Congressional mandate, there's a mental health equivalent: 988. The new 988 system, effective July 16, 2022, is a universal emergency number for people experiencing a mental health crisis, including those at risk for suicide.

Dial 988 for Direct Connection to Suicide, Mental Health Crisis Support

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While it does not replace the current hotline number (1-800-273-8255), the easy-to-remember 988 number quickly connects a caller to suicide prevention resources, and substance and mental healthcare in their local community.

Why the Need?

Emergency medical services are dispatched for only 2% of Lifeline calls. By implementing 988 Ohio can reduce the burden on law enforcement and emergency medical resources when responding to a mental health crisis, so they can better respond to other public safety needs.

Reaching More Ohioans in Crisis

Each of Ohio's 88 counties will have 988 coverage, which is essential for many Ohioans. Although more than 72,000 people in 2020¹ reached out for help via the Lifeline, the new 3-digit number will expand access to life-saving services for those in crisis.

988 is expected to dramatically reduce the call/response burden on law enforcement and emergency medical personnel, enabling them to better respond to emergency medical and related public safety concerns.

Dedicated to Crisis Support

Having a separate crisis emergency number in addition to 911 is important because only 2% of crisis calls result in the need for emergency medical services.¹

Resources

SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration)

<https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/988/partner-toolkit>

OhioMHAS (Ohio Mental Health and Addition Services)

<https://mha.ohio.gov/about-us/priorities/ohios-988-implementation>

Just the Beginning...

Like the other 49 states, Ohio is responsible for funding this state's 988 infrastructure, including phone lines, computer systems, staffing, and volunteer resources. For Ohio, 988 is a launchpad for the bigger, broader vision of transforming the state's behavior healthcare and crisis response

988 will be the starting point that will eventually include mobile crisis in communities, as well as crisis stabilization units for people experiencing a mental health or substance use crisis.

To fulfill the potential of 988 to transform Ohio's behavioral health care and crisis response, we have the following goals:

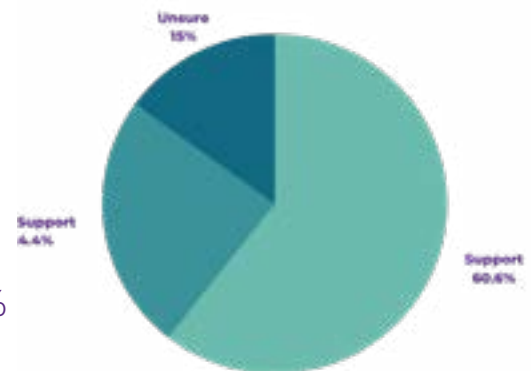
- Make crisis services accessible to all by establishing crisis stabilization and mobile crisis units in each county or community.
- Expand the network of National Suicide Prevention Lifeline operators to the entire state. Improve our answer rate until we answer 100% of calls in-state.
- Ensure all Lifeline providers observe best practice and training requirements.
- Create and maintain a database of available crisis referrals so Lifeline operators know who to call in each community.
- Develop and maintain data collection standards to guide improvements.
- Establish a legal and regulatory framework that creates parity between 988 and 911 capacity and operations.
- Create a sustainable funding source to achieve each of the goals outlined above.

OSPF conducted a poll with Right Point Research asking Ohioans if they would support an additional 50-cent fee on their phone bill each month to fund the state's 9-8-8 services. Of the 1,000 people polled, 60% said they would support the fee.

Ohio is working with public and private partners to create sustainable funding to support the current and future goals of 988.

References

1. National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. "Ohio and the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 2020." <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Ohio-Annual-State-Report-2020.pdf>. Accessed July 6, 2022.



ABOUT OHIO SUICIDE PREVENTION FOUNDATION

OSPF gives hope to those in crisis, strength to those in the struggle, and comfort to those in grief. OSPF is a non-profit organization that works tirelessly to help all of Ohio's communities reduce the risk of suicide. Our work includes supporting those impacted by suicide, raising awareness of mental health issues, and coordinating community resources and evidence-based prevention strategies across the state.



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