



## Fact Sheet: Spotlight on Austin, Texas Mental Health and Substance Use Crisis Care

Federal and local officials meet to discuss 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline one year milestones, future of crisis care.



**Note to editors/reporters: B-roll and soundbites are available for download at the [988 Newsroom page](#).**



### Texas

Subject matter experts from the federal, state, and local levels met on Wednesday, June 14, for a discussion of the milestones of the [988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline's](#) first year and the future of crisis care for mental health and substance use in Texas and across the United States. Topics they discussed included:

- **988 Lifeline: The First Year:** Almost a year ago, on July 16, 2022, the nation transitioned to 988 as the easy-to-remember number to reach trained crisis counselors for help with suicide, mental health, and substance use-related crises.
- **The Future Vision:** The longer-term vision for mental health and substance use crisis care is to build a robust response system across the country that links 988 Lifeline users to community-based providers who can deliver a full range of crisis care services, if needed.

From extended observation to crisis residential and crisis respite, Texas has spent years building out a continuum of crisis care.

Integral Care offers their own 24/7 Crisis Helpline, which gives the community they serve one more option that they can reach out to when in need.

### Press Event Speakers

- **Michelle Alletto**, Chief Program and Services Officer at Texas Health and Human Services Commission
- **Monica Johnson**, Director of the 988 & Behavioral Health Crisis Coordinating Office at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the federal agency that oversees the 988 Lifeline

### Spotlight on Austin, Texas

- Texas has a “no wrong door” to accessing behavioral health crisis and follows [SAMHSA's 2020 National Guidelines for Behavioral Health Crisis Care](#) for a system that provides:
  - 24/7 crisis intervention services via phone, text and chat—provided in Austin by Integral Care.
  - If needed, mobile crisis teams are available for dispatch in a timely manner to someone in crisis at their home, work, or other location.
  - Crisis receiving and stabilization locations that provide short-term care and crisis stabilization services and referrals for follow-up care.
- In Austin and Travis County, long-standing relationships between first responders, city and county elected officials, and Integral Care—the Local Mental Health Authority—help ensure that people in Austin/Travis County have multiple access points to varying levels of mental health care, no matter if they call 988, 911 or the local 24/7 Crisis Helpline. Benefits include improved health outcomes and reduction in unnecessary use of jail, ERs and inpatient hospitalization.
- Collaboration with first responders includes training—cadets, sworn officers, 911 call center operators and medics—and co-location at the 911 center.
- From September 2021 to August 2022, 81% of 911 calls handled by Integral Care were diverted from police response.

**Note to reporters/editors:** [B-roll package](#) provides video of mobile crisis outreach teams and the 988 Lifeline call center.

- **Dr. Tia Dole**, Chief 988 Lifeline Officer, Vibrant Emotional Health, the 988 Lifeline national network administrator
- **Dawn Handley**, Chief Operations Officer of Integral Care, Austin’s 988 Lifeline call center

## Local Mental Health Stats and Relevant Issues

- In May 2023, Texas answered **11,502** total contacts (calls, texts, and chats) to the 988 Lifeline.
- [The National Alliance on Mental Illness](#) estimates that **3,347,000 adults in Texas have a mental health condition**—that’s more than three times the population of Austin.
- According to SAMHSA’s [2021 National Survey on Drug Use and Health](#), **8.22%** of Texans 18 or older had a **major depressive episode**, **5.33%** had **serious thoughts of suicide**, and **1.78%** made **suicide plans** in the past year.
- A [Kaiser Family Foundation survey](#) found that **36.8% of adults in Texas** reported symptoms of anxiety and/or depressive disorder. Among adults in Texas who reported experiencing symptoms of anxiety and/or depressive disorder, **30% reported needing counseling or therapy** but not receiving it. Drug overdose death rates increased in Texas from 10.1 per 100,000 in 2011 to 16.8 per 100,000 in 2021, primarily due to opioids.

## More About the 988 Lifeline

- Since launching in July 2022, the 988 Lifeline has had about **4 million** contacts through calls, texts, and chats—an average of about 350,000 contacts per month.
- In May 2023, the 988 Lifeline received **402,494** total contacts.
- Federal investment in the 988 Lifeline has totaled **nearly \$1 billion** in recent years, not including mental health block grants and other federal money that supports behavioral health care systems.
- SAMHSA recently announced [awards](#) that will expand and enhance mobile crisis response teams—including two in the state of Texas—and [more than \\$200 million in new funding opportunities for the 988 Lifeline](#).
- Specialized services are also available:
  - Military veterans, service members, and their families can reach the Veterans Crisis Line by selecting Option 1.
  - Callers who want to talk to someone in Spanish can do so by selecting Option 2. Spanish text and chat are expected to be available this summer.
  - Currently, a pilot program offers specialized call, text and chat support for LGBTQI+ youth and people under the age of 25.
- Anyone who calls, texts, or chats 988 is not required to say who they are or where they are to receive services from the 988 Lifeline.
- In 2021, suicide was the [second-leading cause of death](#) for young people ages 10–14, and the fifth in people ages 35–54. Also in 2021, almost 107,000 [drug overdose deaths](#) occurred.

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### *Additional notes for reporters/editors*

- The [988 Lifeline Newsroom](#) provides B-roll and other resources.
- Also see [988 Lifeline FAQs](#).
- Reporters and editors are encouraged to include the following language when reporting about suicide: *If you or someone you know is struggling or in crisis, help is available. Call or text 988 or chat 988lifeline.org.*