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.*