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NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE AWARDS STIPENDS TO SUPPORT INCREASINGLY STRAINED CRISIS CENTERS

Funding Will Benefit Crisis Centers Overwhelmed by Increased Call Volume

In Response to the Economic Downturn

The federally-funded National Suicide Prevention Lifeline announced today that 20 of its more than 140 suicide prevention crisis centers around the United States have been awarded a stipend to meet increased demands for their services as a result of the economic downturn. The awarded centers will use these funds to increase their call capacity to answer calls by enhancing staffing, equipment, or infrastructure; and to conduct outreach to individuals grappling with severe economic stress or provide follow-up for individuals at high risk of suicide.

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline network, a service funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), received additional one-year-only supplemental funds from SAMHSA to support select crisis centers responding to growing community needs in this troubled economic environment. The SAMHSA funding required the Lifeline to conduct a competitive application process for its network of crisis centers, through which 20 centers would ultimately receive stipends of up to \$50,000 each. A total of 53 centers met eligibility requirements, and 32 centers submitted applications, which were subsequently reviewed and scored by a team of eight independent reviewers.

The 20 centers, who were awarded stipends of \$26,000 - \$50,000, include:

- Behavioral Health Link (Atlanta, GA)
- Suicide Prevention Center, Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services (Los Angeles, CA)
- Oregon Partnership Alcohol and Drug Helpline and YouthLine (Portland, OR)
- The Effort (Sacramento, CA)
- CrisisLink (Arlington, VA)
- Help Hotline Crisis Center (Youngstown, OH)
- LifeNet (New York, NY)

- Pueblo Suicide Prevention Center (Pueblo, CO)
- Suicide Prevention Services (Batavia, IL)
- EMPACT Suicide Prevention Center (Tempe, AZ)
- 2-1-1/Lifeline – A Program of ABVI-Goodwill (Rochester, NY)
- The Samaritans of Boston (Boston, MA)
- Switchboard of Miami (Miami, FL)
- Crisis Support Services of Alameda County (Oakland, CA)
- Neighborhood Service Organization (Detroit, MI)
- Third Level Crisis Intervention Center (Chesterfield, MI)
- Mental Health Services (Cleveland, OH)
- FirstLink Hotline (Fargo, ND)
- Baton Rouge Crisis Intervention Center (Baton Rouge, LA)
- 211 Brevard (Cocoa, FL)

“Many suicide prevention centers are under enormous pressure to cope with the sharp rise in callers dealing with financial hardship,” said John Draper, Ph.D., Project Director for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. “These stipends will not only have an immediate, positive impact on each of the crisis centers and the communities they serve, but will enable centers to share best practices and technologies for crisis prevention.”

“Prevention is SAMHSA's number one strategic initiative and the prevention of suicide is a critical part of that initiative,” said SAMHSA Administrator Pamela S. Hyde J.D. “While our suicide prevention lifeline network is strong, local crisis centers are feeling the strain of increased call volume and diminished resources because of economic conditions. SAMHSA is currently preparing an update to the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention to help guide this critical initiative and these awards will help local crisis centers save lives by building capacity, reaching out to those experiencing economic distress, and providing follow up to those at high risk for suicide.”

Calls to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline have increased from 545,000 in 2008 to 626,000 in 2009. In January and February, 2010, a total of 102,586 Lifeline calls were

answered, more than a 5 percent increase from the same period in 2009, suggesting that the increase in Lifeline call volume is continuing.

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-TALK (8255) is a 24-hour, toll-free, confidential suicide prevention hotline available to anyone in suicidal crisis or emotional distress. By dialing 1-800-273-TALK, the call is routed to the nearest crisis center in our national network of more than 140 crisis centers. The Lifeline's national network of local crisis centers provides crisis counseling and mental health referrals day and night.

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is administered by Link2Health Solutions, Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of the Mental Health Association of New York City. Lifeline's grant is funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

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