The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and Washington, D.C.

Semi-annual Call Volume and Center Status Report

(July-December 2019)
WHO ARE WE?

The Lifeline is the nation's public safety net for all American residents in emotional distress or suicidal crisis.

The Lifeline was established in 2005 by SAMHSA.

Through its toll-free number (800-273-TALK), the Lifeline is a national service designed to seamlessly connect persons in each state to locally financed and operated crisis centers, so they are able to get the best care, nearest to them.

This year, the Lifeline's network of over 160 local centers will answer over 2 million calls.

WE BELIEVE

1. Healing, hope, and help can happen.

2. We can all take action to prevent suicide.

3. Local crisis centers are critical partners in all community suicide prevention.

WASHINGTON, D.C. MEMBERS

In Washington, D.C., there is 1 crisis center which is a member of the Lifeline...

 зр DC Department of Mental Health (Washington)
WASHINGTON, D.C. HIGHLIGHTS

The Lifeline is a local and national safety net for people in crisis, with one easily recognizable national toll free hotline.

In the last six months of 2019, there were 3,017 callers from Washington, D.C. to the Lifeline.

Of those 3,017 callers, 56% were able to receive help in Washington, D.C.

Which means that 1,320 callers, were unable to be answered by a local center in Washington, D.C.

Where are the callers from Washington, D.C. being answered?

Callers from Washington, D.C are better served by their local crisis centers. However, if the nearest center to the caller is busy, Lifeline network backup centers in other regions across the United States make their best efforts to answer these calls.

This chart shows total annual call volume from Washington, D.C. for the last five years.

This chart shows where the callers from Washington, D.C were answered between July and December of 2019.
OUR GOALS

Why is it important that your district support local Lifeline crisis centers?

Best Practices in Crisis Care

The clinical care task force for the National Action Alliance finds that best practices in suicide care have not been implemented in all crisis settings*. Being a member of the Lifeline ensures that your state is meeting standards established by SAMHSA funded evaluation of crisis centers*. These evaluations show Lifeline centers significantly reduce emotional distress and suicidality in callers. All Lifeline centers are required to be accredited and adopt industry standard practices based on research and national expert consensus. Recent research by Rand® shows that Lifeline centers do a better job of assessing risk and reducing distress in callers than non-Lifeline crisis centers.

Cost Effective Means to Fill in Gaps of Care

Aside from research showing that Lifeline centers reduce suicidal and emotional distress in callers, Lifeline centers in your district can better ensure that Washington, D.C. callers “go through the right door” for local care. Local Lifeline crisis centers reduce the burden on your emergency rooms, police, and emergency responders, as well as your behavioral healthcare providers, who often must step in when emotional crises escalate. The centers also provide a safety net in the absence of other affordable community resources. People in crisis can easily use hotlines to access help when other mental health, substance abuse, and social services have eligibility restrictions, are unavailable in rural areas, are inaccessible during late-night hours, or no longer operate because of budget cuts.

Public Recognition

To efficiently connect callers with your local crisis and behavioral health services, the crisis centers in Washington, D.C. need to be part of the Lifeline. The phone number and brand of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline can be associated with many state and national public health efforts to prevent suicide. Millions of suicide prevention stakeholders across this country are promoting the Lifeline offline and online, but 75% of Lifeline callers first learn of the service from online resources.

Questions?

Your callers in crisis deserve the best help they can receive – and they deserve to receive it in their own state, from providers who know where the best care is to support their local needs.

Source: gov/gry/C464

212-614-6379
mattaylor@vibrant.org
Matt Taylor, Director of Network Development

Page 3

Page 4