

USA: 3-DIGIT DIALING CODE INITIATIVE FOR PEOPLE IN MENTAL HEALTH OR SUICIDAL CRISIS

IIMHL, 9/9/19



John Draper, Ph.D.

Executive Director, National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

Executive VP of National Networks, Vibrant Emotional Health

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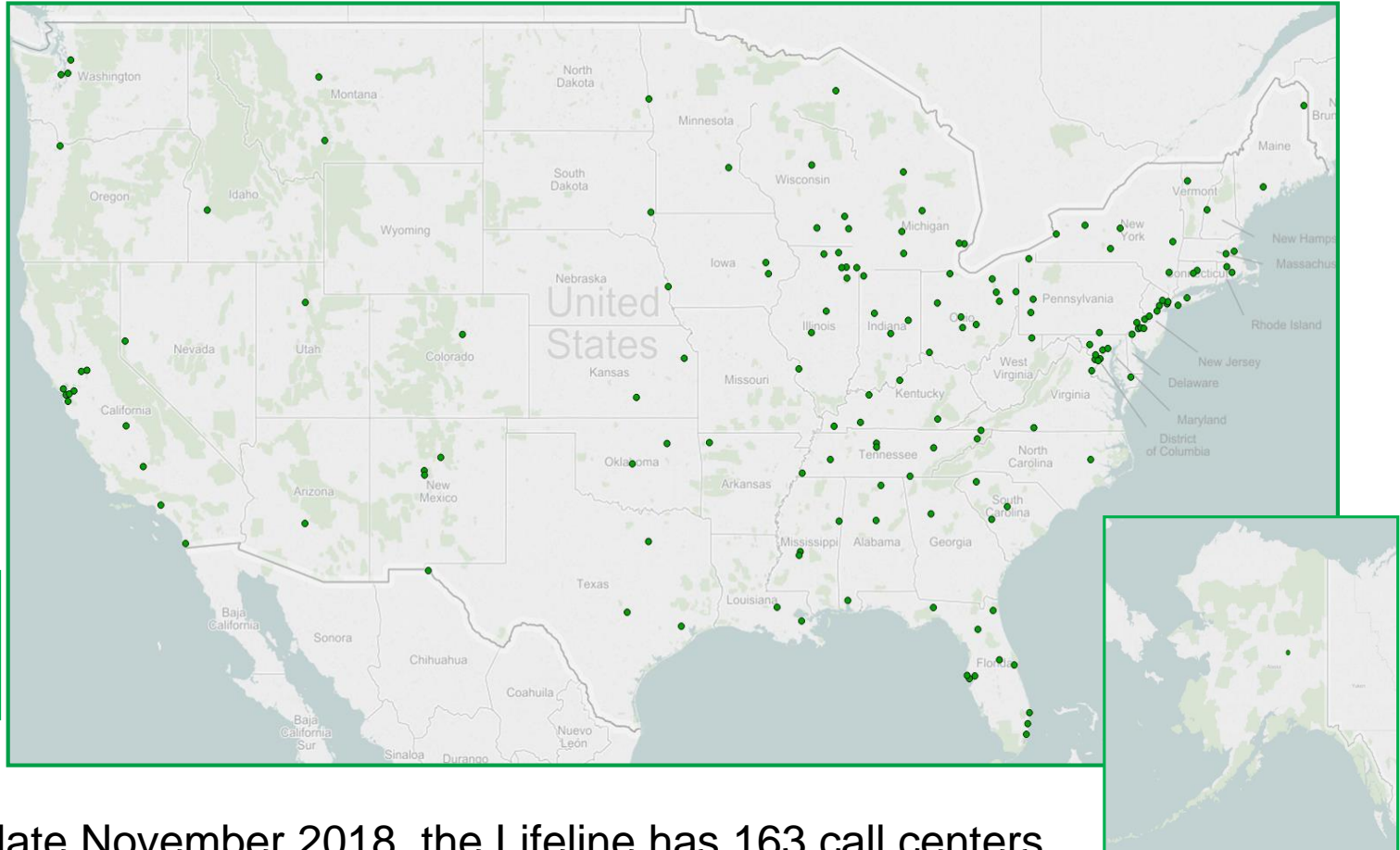
NSP Lifeline: 800-273-TALK (2004)

The Lifeline Mission

To effectively reach and serve all persons who could be at risk of suicide in the United States through a national network of crisis call centers.

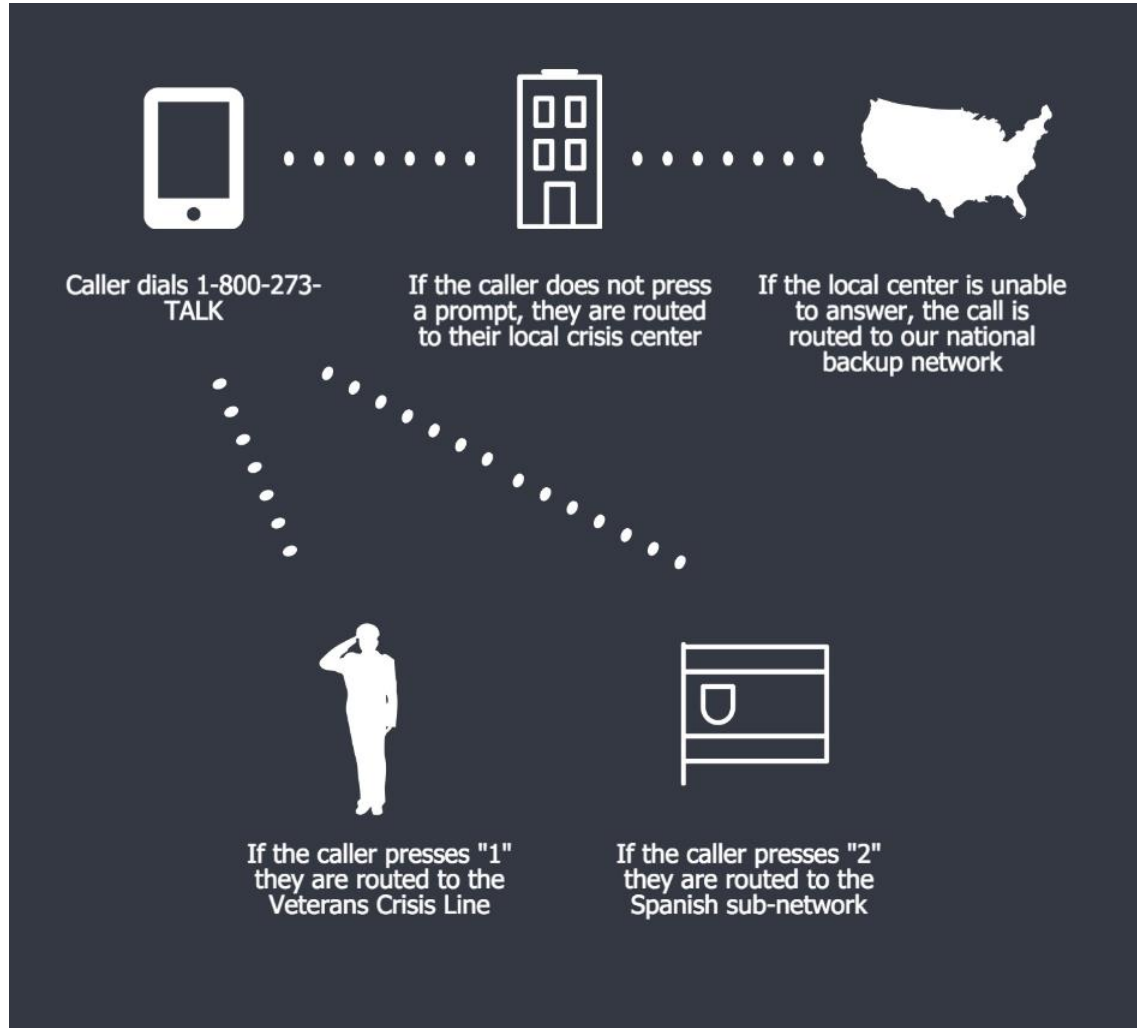


A National Network of Local Centers



As of late November 2018, the Lifeline has 163 call centers in 48 states; 5 new centers are slated to come online by 2/15/19

The Lifeline's Call Flow



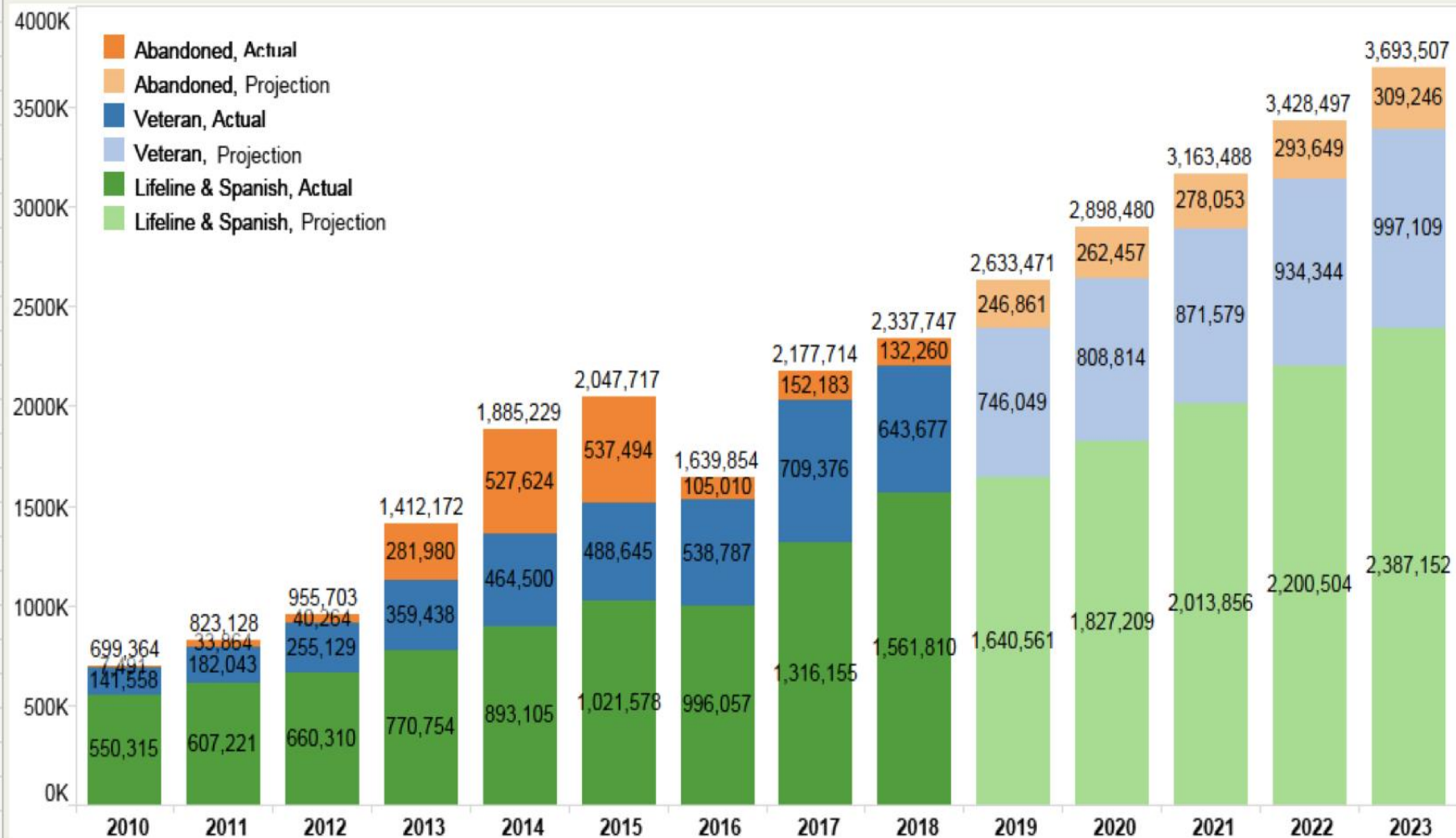
The Lifeline: National Portal for Local Service

- The Lifeline is a network of independently operated, independently funded local and state call centers. (170 +)
- Funded as a networking and certification grant, but not for services to answer calls locally. Most centers do not receive pay locally to answer Lifeline calls.
- **Why local centers, and not a national centralized one?**
 - Suicide prevention actions rooted in communities (training, education)
 - Linkages to local resources (including crisis and emergency services)



Lifeline Call Projections

Calls With Projections Through 2023



N11 Call Volume Projections

- **Lifeline estimates:**
 - Over 5m calls year 1, over 13m annually by 5th year
- **VA estimates:**
 - 4.6-16m calls annually

NATIONAL SUICIDE HOTLINE IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2018

379-1

Passed

- Signed into law August 14, 2018
- Study feasibility and impact of national 3-digit dialing code (N-1-1) for mental health and suicidal crisis**
 - **Effectiveness?**
 - **What number?**
 - **Cost-benefit analysis?**

Reports Reviewed by FCC

- In Feb 2019, SAMHSA and the VA have submitted their reports to the FCC. SAMHSA recommended 3-digit, with vital funding supports noted. VA was silent on recommendations, noting their efficacy.
- SAMHSA recommended 3-digit because:
 - **“Cognitive access”**: easier to recall and dial in crisis state
 - **Lifeline is effective** in reducing distress/suicidality. *Serve more, save more.*
 - **Divert unnecessary calls from 911**, law enforcement and emergency services
 - **Could transform crisis care systems** nationally

FCC REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

A 3-digit code is needed

“...we find that the Lifeline has been effective, including in addressing the needs of Veterans. However, based on the SAMHSA Report as well as comments filed in the record, we also find that the Lifeline could be more effective in preventing suicides and providing crisis intervention if it were accessible via a simple, easy-to-remember, 3-digit dialing code.”

FCC Report, 8/14/2019

FCC REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

3-Digit Code should be 988

- One of few area codes not in use. All N11 numbers are being used and re-purposing takes time and expense
- Take less time to implement because no need to re-educate the public and sunset an N11 number now being used for other purpose

Challenges

- Switching costs are significant, and will take some time (but less than sunsetting currently used N11 numbers?)
- “Relatively small number of legacy switches cannot accommodate 988” (but will be replaced over time?)

Suicide prevention hotline to get three-digit phone number

FCC chairman says he will move ahead following legislation, staff report



Ajit Pai, Chair, FCC, Report to Congress, 8/14/2019

“Crisis Centers save lives.... Increasing the convenience and immediacy of access to a national suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline via a 3-digit dialing code will therefore help spread a proven, effective intervention. In short, we believe that designating the 988 code for a national suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline system is highly likely to lower suicide mortality risk in the United States....and thus that the benefits of this action are quite likely to outweigh the costs.”

National Suicide Hotline Designation Act

Reps. Chris Stewart (R-UT) & Seth Moulton (D-MA) introduced Bill 8/20/19

- 988 designation for mental health & suicide prevention nationally, wireless and landline, within a year of Bill passage
- Operating through the Lifeline and VCL, maintained by SAMHSA & VA
- State authority to charge cell phone/IP carrier customers to fund 988 services
- 988 Geolocation capabilities (for cell phone location routing and call trace) feasibility study completed within 180 days of Bill passage

Other Bill in Drafting

John Katko (R-NY) & Don Beyer (D-VA)
(Not released, not titled as of yet)

- Set performance indicators for service at local centers and national back-ups for
 - Call response
 - Follow-up services
- Periodic QI-testing, monitoring
- QI Plan received by and implemented through SAMHSA within a year of Bill passage
- \$50m to centers annually to implement and perform to standards

Next Steps and Issues to Be Addressed

- Confirmed 3-digit designation
- Support network infrastructure
 - funding for states and local centers
 - performance indicators/QA
 - technology platform for system
- Technical needs to implement 3-digit code across phone carriers and systems nationally
- Marketing of new number