

# Preparing for 988 in Delaware

Summer 2022



## What You Need to Know

On July 16, 2022, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-8255) will transition to an easy-to-remember, 3-digit number (988). Options for texting and online chat will also become more available. This is a federally-required telecom change and Delaware, like every state, has been preparing for it. Along with a multidisciplinary 988 Planning Coalition, Delaware's Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health has developed a plan to ensure there is 24/7 statewide coverage and an enhanced capacity to handle the expected increase in call volume.

### ABOUT 988

- The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-8255) will switch to an easy-to-remember, 3-digit number (988) on July 16, 2022.
- 988 will accept calls, texts and chats from anyone who needs support for a suicidal, mental health and/or substance use crisis. People also can contact 988 if they are concerned about a loved one in crisis.
- During the first year of 988, people with a Delaware area code who reach out to 988 will be connected with ContactLifeline, Delaware's only Lifeline Center.
- As early as the end of 2022, Delaware will add a second Lifeline Center operated by DHSS's Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health.

### ABOUT CONTACTLIFELINE

- ContactLifeline, Inc. has been operating in Delaware since 1974 and has been serving as the state's only National Suicide Prevention Lifeline Center.
- ContactLifeline provides telephone counseling, crisis intervention, referral information, education, and prevention services for persons in crisis, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.
- ContactLifeline is funded in part by Delaware's Department of Health and Social Services using federal funds, as well as through the Delaware Criminal Justice Council.



# What you can do to prepare



## FOR INDIVIDUALS

- Call 988 or continue to call 1-800-273-8255 to reach the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline when you or your loved ones experience suicidal crises.
- Continue to use existing crisis hotline services as additional resources, especially if an in-person response is needed.
  - Adult Crisis Hotline:
    - 1-800-652-2929 (Northern DE)
    - 1-800-345-6785 (Southern DE)
  - Youth Crisis Hotline: 1-800-969-HELP (4357)
- If you or someone you know is in immediate danger, call 911.



## FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROVIDERS

- Begin conversations with staff in your agency on the existing referral sources and how they can expand to better serve individuals experiencing crisis.
- Continue to provide clients and other individuals:
  - Adult Crisis Hotline:
    - 1-800-652-2929 (Northern DE)
    - 1-800-345-6785 (Southern DE)
  - Youth Crisis Hotline: 1-800-969-HELP (4357)
  - National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-8255)



## FOR STATE, COUNTY AND MUNICIPAL AGENCIES

- Watch for updates as the 988 transition continues in 2023, and services and staffing expand.
- Engage local partners such as behavioral health providers, law enforcement agencies, medical providers and schools to discuss how your community will use 988.



## FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT, PARAMEDICS AND 911 CENTERS

- The National Emergency Number Association 911-988 Interoperability Standards Workgroup will release recommendations on 911 and 988 interactions this summer.
- Delaware has a statewide 911-988 Coordinating Workgroup that will continue to meet through the transition and implementation of 988.

