

**Media Contact:**

Katie Gorscak, (202) 418-2156  
katie.gorscak@fcc.gov

**For Immediate Release****FCC DESIGNATES ‘988’ AS 3-DIGIT NUMBER  
FOR NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION HOTLINE**

*Action Will Help Combat Rising Suicide Rates by Making It Easier for  
Americans in Crisis to Obtain Assistance from Trained Counselors*

WASHINGTON, July 16, 2020—Today, the Federal Communications Commission adopted rules to establish 988 as the new, nationwide, 3-digit phone number for Americans in crisis to connect with suicide prevention and mental health crisis counselors. The rules require all phone service providers to direct all 988 calls to the existing National Suicide Prevention Lifeline by July 16, 2022. During the transition to 988, Americans who need help should continue to contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline by calling 1-800-273-8255 (1-800-273-TALK) and through [online chats](#). Veterans and Service members may reach the [Veterans Crisis Line](#) by pressing 1 after dialing, chatting online at [www.veteranscrisisline.net](http://www.veteranscrisisline.net), or texting 838255.

The new rules will apply to all telecommunications carriers as well as all interconnected and one-way Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) service providers. They provide for a two-year transition, reflecting the real challenges of this nationwide effort, including the need for widespread network changes and providing time for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline to prepare for the expected increase in the volume of calls. Under these rules, calls to 988 will be directed to 1-800-273-TALK, which will remain operational during the 988 transition and after it is completed. To ensure that calls to 988 reach the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, all covered providers will be required to implement 10-digit dialing in areas that both use seven-digit dialing and use 988 as the first three numbers in seven-digit phone numbers.

Since 2008, suicide has ranked as the tenth leading cause of death in the United States. Suicide claimed the lives of more than 48,000 Americans in 2018, resulting in about one death every 11 minutes. An FCC staff [report](#) to Congress in 2019 proposed establishing 988 as an easy to remember three-digit code for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. Staff analyzed various options and determined 988 was the best option for increasing access to crisis resources and ensuring the fastest possible transition. Establishing the easy-to-remember 988 as the “911” for suicide prevention and mental health services will make it easier for Americans in crisis to access the help they need and decrease the stigma surrounding suicide and mental health issues.

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is a national network of approximately 170 crisis centers. The centers are supported by local and state, and public and private sources, as well as by Congressional appropriations through the Department of Health and Human Services’ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The National

Suicide Prevention Lifeline is the access point for the Veterans Crisis Line, which is managed by the [United States Department of Veterans Affairs](#).

Action by the Commission July 16, 2020 by Report and Order (FCC 20-100). Chairman Pai, Commissioners O’Rielly, Carr, Rosenworcel, and Starks approving and issuing separate statements.

WC Docket No. 18-336

###

**Media Relations: (202) 418-0500 / ASL: (844) 432-2275 / Twitter: @FCC / [www.fcc.gov](http://www.fcc.gov)**

*This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action. See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).*