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**For Immediate Release****FCC ADOPTS RULES TO PROMOTE RELIABLE ACCESS TO THE  
988 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE**

WASHINGTON, July 20, 2023—The Federal Communications Commission today adopted rules to help ensure that the public has access to the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline if a service outage occurs. The new rules require service providers that have a role in delivering 988 calls to report outages that potentially affect 988 service, which will hasten service restoration and enable officials to inform the public of alternate ways to contact the 988 Lifeline.

Last July, the Commission required certain service providers to support nationwide three-digit dialing to the 988 Lifeline. Since then, the 988 Lifeline has answered nearly five million calls, texts, and chat messages. Reliable, timely access to the 988 Lifeline is crucial to ensure that people experiencing a suicidal or mental health crisis receive immediate support.

On December 1, 2022, however, the 988 Lifeline suffered a nationwide service outage that lasted several hours, making the service inaccessible to voice callers. Once the Department of Health and Human Services became aware of the outage, it notified the public of alternative ways to contact the 988 Lifeline, including through texting or the Lifeline’s online webchat.

To address such issues in the future, the Commission today adopted rules to ensure that HHS’s Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration (SAMHSA), the Department of Veterans Affairs, the 988 Lifeline administrator, and the Commission itself receive timely and actionable information about 988 service outages. Today’s action:

- Requires service providers that have a role in delivering 988 calls—including cable, satellite, wireless, wireline, interconnected VoIP providers, and those that provide capabilities to the 988 Lifeline—to report outages that potentially affect the 988 Lifeline to the Commission’s Network Outage Reporting System, similar to the Commission’s existing reporting requirement for outages that potentially affect 911.
- Requires these service providers to provide notice of such events to SAMHSA, the VA, and the 988 Lifeline administrator as well as updates on outages that last longer than two hours.
- Defines reportable outages as those that result in a loss of the ability of the 988 Lifeline to receive, process, or forward calls, potentially affecting at least 900,000 user-minutes and lasting at least 30 minutes in duration.

These notification requirements will enable SAMHSA, the VA, and the 988 Lifeline to not only inform the public of alternate ways to connect to the 988 Lifeline but also to take steps to reroute 988 calls to available crisis centers. In addition, the Commission will be able to

improve 988 reliability by analyzing outage trends and identifying best practices to prevent and mitigate outages.

Action by the Commission July 20, 2023 by Report and Order (FCC 23-57). Chairwoman Rosenworcel, Commissioners Carr, Starks, and Simington approving. Chairwoman Rosenworcel and Commissioner Starks issuing separate statements.

PS Docket Nos. 23-5, 15-80; WC Docket No. 18-336

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*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).*