

Media Contact:

Office of Media Relations
MediaRelations@fcc.gov

For Immediate Release**FCC PROPOSES IMPROVEMENTS FOR ROUTING WIRELESS CALLS TO THE 988 LIFELINE*****Proposal Aims to Implement Georouting Requirement to Connect Callers in Crisis to Local Resources***

WASHINGTON, April 25, 2024—The Federal Communications Commission today proposed improvements for wireless call routing to the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline that would connect callers in crisis to behavioral health resources in their state or county while protecting their privacy. Calls to 988, the three-digit number designated in 2020 for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, are currently routed based on the caller’s area code and exchange, which presents some obstacles to callers whose area code does not correspond to their location.

Reliable, timely access to the 988 Lifeline is crucial to linking people experiencing a suicidal or mental health crisis with immediate support. For example, under current practices, a wireless caller with a 703 Virginia area code who dials the 988 Lifeline will be routed to a Virginia crisis center, regardless of where the caller is located. Under the FCC’s proposal, if that caller dials the 988 Lifeline while located in California, that call would be routed to a local crisis center in California, near the caller’s physical location.

Today’s proposal would require a georouting solution to be implemented for all wireless calls to the 988 Lifeline. Georouting refers to technical solutions that enable calls to be routed based on the location of the caller without transmitting the caller’s precise location information. Such solutions would permit a wireless call to the 988 Lifeline to be routed to nearby crisis centers based on factors such as the cell tower that originated the call rather than the area code of the wireless device used to place the call, allowing carriers to maintain any privacy requirements they may have about the nature of such sensitive calls. Proponents of georouting claim that routing individuals to local crisis centers allows counselors to better respond to unique factors and situations, which may also help avoid unnecessary use of emergency services and law enforcement.

In September 2023, the Chairwoman [called](#) on major wireless carriers and carrier associations to address this discrepancy by taking steps to identify and develop a georouting solution that could be deployed in wireless networks within a reasonable time.

Last July, the FCC adopted rules that require providers to report outages that may potentially impact 988 service similar to the existing requirement for 911. This requirement affects all providers with a role in delivering the calls, including cable, satellite, wireless, wireline, interconnected VoIP providers.

The Second Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking adopted today reflects coordinated efforts by the FCC and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to make it easier for those in crisis to get help.

Action by the Commission April 25, 2024 by Second Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FCC 24-45). Chairwoman Rosenworcel, Commissioners Carr, Starks, Simington, and Gomez approving. Chairwoman Rosenworcel, Commissioners Carr, Starks, and Gomez issuing separate statements.

WC Docket No. 18-336

###

Media Relations: (202) 418-0500 / ASL: (844) 432-2275 / Twitter: @FCC / 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).*