

U.S. Sen. Baldwin: 988 Suicide and Crisis Prevention Hotline launches nationwide

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WISCONSIN – Today, U.S. Senator Baldwin joined a press conference at TDS Telecom in Wisconsin to highlight the upcoming launch of the new 988 National Suicide and Crisis Lifeline on Saturday, July 16, 2022. The 988 Lifeline is made possible by U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin's *National Suicide Hotline Designation Act*, [bipartisan legislation](#) that [passed Congress](#) and became law in 2020.

[The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](#) is a national network of local crisis centers that provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week in the United States. The new calling code of 988 will allow people of all ages who are experiencing a crisis—whether that is thoughts of suicide, a mental health concern or substance use issue, or any other kind of emotional distress—to get help for themselves or a loved one by connecting them with a trained crisis counselor.

“We need to do everything we can to help those in mental health crises and prevent suicide, and that means improving the tools and resources they have when they are suffering,” **said Senator Baldwin.** “After working to get my bipartisan legislation signed into law and ensure funding for the implementation, I am so proud to see this quick and easy three-digit phone number launch so Americans in crisis can get the timely help and support they need. This will save lives.”

“People in crisis need help right away. That’s why we need resources like 988 to ensure a universal entry point to crisis services, similar to access to other emergency medical services through 911. We would like to thank Senator Baldwin for her leadership and thank all of our partners who have worked with us to ensure

that Wisconsin is ready to provide this critical service for residents,” **said Wisconsin Department of Health Services Secretary-designee Karen Timberlake.**

“From veterans across the state of different backgrounds and generations, I hear a similar sentiment shared again and again—‘Of the men and women who served with me, I’ve lost more to suicide than to combat,” **said Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Mary Kolar.** “For veterans, you can now call 988 and press 1 to access the Veterans Crisis Line and be connected to a real person qualified to support veterans. Accessibility to effective resources is vital, especially for veterans experiencing a mental health crisis. I’m so grateful for the support and partnerships that made this possible, and I truly believe lives will be saved.”

As part of the Baldwin-supported Bipartisan *Safer Communities Act* that was signed into law this week, [\\$150 million is being invested](#) to support implementation of the 9-8-8 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline. Senator Baldwin also helped pass the 2022 fiscal year appropriations bill in March of this year that included over [\\$101 million for the transition to 988](#) hotline and \$5 million for the new Behavioral Health Crisis and 988 Coordinating Office at the Department of Health and Human Services. In late 2021, the Biden administration committed [more than \\$280 million](#) to fund both the Lifeline and 24/7 staff increases for states.

For more information on the 988 National Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, click [here](#).