



STATE OF MICHIGAN

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
LANSING

GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

ELIZABETH HERTEL
DIRECTOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
July 14, 2022

CONTACT: Lynn Sutfin
517-241-2112
SutfinL1@michigan.gov

988 crisis line helping connect Michigan residents experiencing behavioral health crises to resources

LANSING, Mich. – Michiganders in crisis now have an easy-to-remember three-digit number to call for help – 988. Michigan has joined the nation in [transitioning to the 988-dialing code](#), which will operate through the existing National Suicide Prevention Lifeline’s network of more than 200 locally operated and funded crisis centers across the country.

“The 988 number is another step toward strengthening and transforming crisis care and mental health services in our state, which is a key focus of the department,” said Elizabeth Hertel, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) director. “This universal number means no matter where you live or call from, you can reach a trained crisis counselor who can help. We encourage Michigan residents or their family members to call 988 if they are experiencing mental health-related distress, emotional distress or a substance use crisis.”



In 2020, Congress designated the new 988 dialing code to operate through the [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#). This action expands the existing Lifeline beyond people who are feeling suicidal to all individuals experiencing a behavioral health crisis, including suicidal thoughts or substance abuse issues .

“Crisis is defined by the caller,” said Dr. Debra Pinals, medical director for Behavioral Health and Forensic Programs, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. “And by providing an easy-to-remember number we are making help more accessible and strengthening support to those in need. Trained counselors will be available 24/7 to field calls. They will listen to the caller’s problems, assess their needs and provide support by connecting them with resources, and alert local emergency crisis teams, if necessary. The roll out of 988 as an easier number to remember will provide a natural extension to the already promising work of the department in implementing the Michigan Crisis and Access Line.”

Anyone with these concerns can call:

- Mental health-related distress.
- Thoughts of suicide.
- Substance use crisis.
- Emotional distress.
- There are specialized services available for veterans, LGBTQ individuals and other groups.
- People who are worried about a loved one who may need support also can call.

The 988-dialing code does not replace the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (800-273-TALK (8255)) or other locally operated crisis lines. Instead, it serves as a universal entry point to connect individuals in need to trained crisis counselors who can help. MDHHS is working to ensure a solid infrastructure is built through coordination with 911 and other crisis service providers as the 988-dialing code launches.

Prior to the development of 988, the [Michigan Crisis and Access Line](#) (MiCAL) was funded by the Michigan Legislature in December 2018. MDHHS was charged with the development of MiCAL, which is currently operating in Oakland County and the Upper Peninsula, and with 988 implementation.

MiCAL is built on the SAMHSA's National Guidelines for Behavioral Health Crisis Care which is also the foundation for 988. In Michigan, MiCAL is responsible for answering 988 calls in all areas of Michigan. In Macomb and Kent counties, Macomb County Community Mental Health and Network 180 will answer 988 calls with MiCAL providing back-up call coverage.

Crisis center calling services are available in English and Spanish, and a Language Line Solutions to provide translation services in more than 250 additional languages is also available. Text and chat are currently available in English only.

TTY users will be served either through their preferred relay service or by dialing [711](#) then [800-273-8255](#).

For more information, visit [988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline and Michigan Crisis & Access Line](#).

#