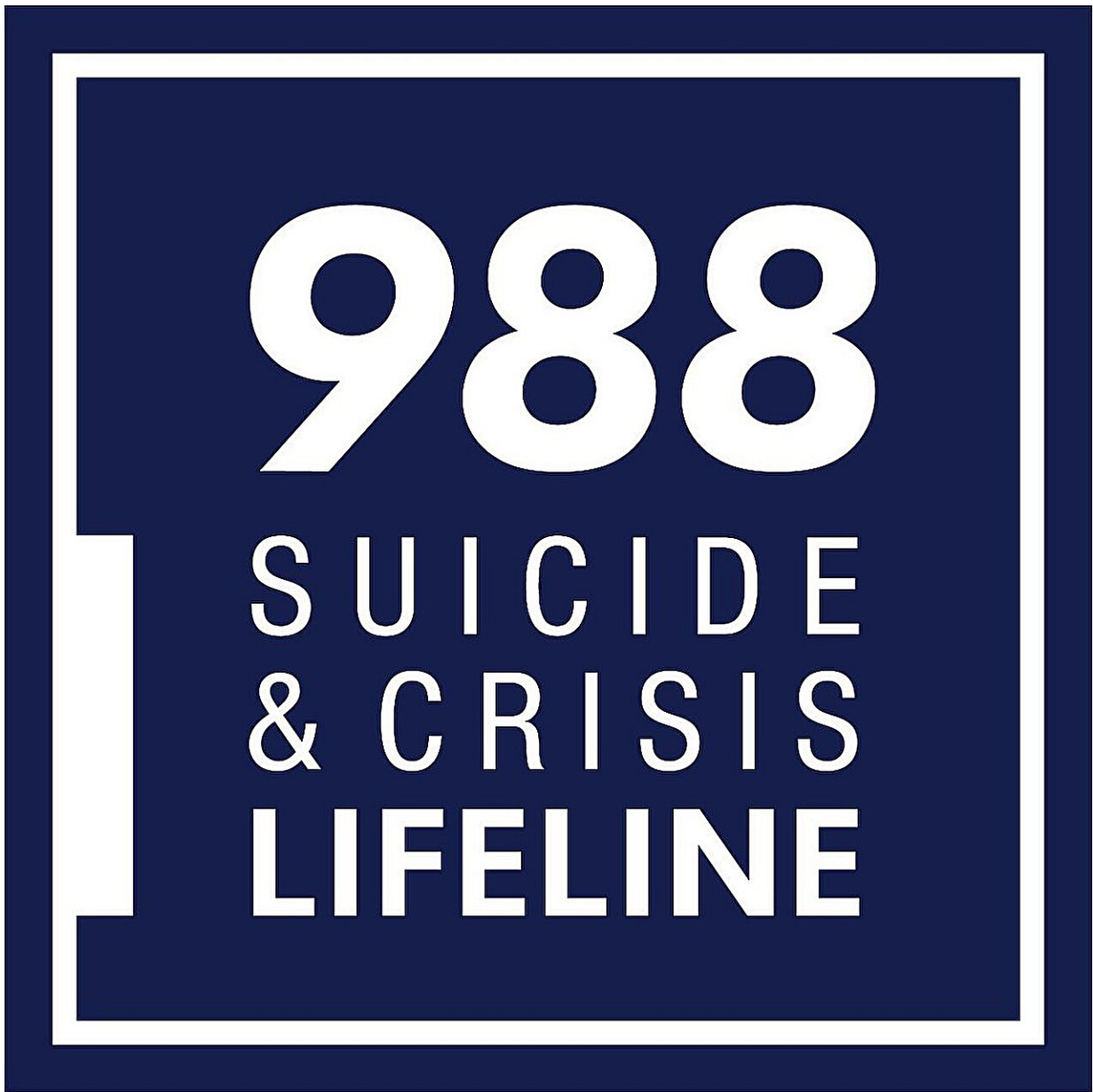


# Two years later, 988 crisis line has answered 10 million requests

July 17 2024, by Robin Foster

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Just two years after the launch of the nation's three-digit crisis hotline, more than 10 million calls, texts and chat messages have been fielded by counselors, U.S. health officials announced Tuesday.

Introduced in July 2022 to simplify [emergency calls](#) and help counter a burgeoning mental health [crisis](#) in the United States, 988 was touted as a simpler way for folks struggling with their [mental health](#) to get help.

"We're connecting more people to help than ever before," HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra said in a news release announcing the milestone.

"We're connecting them faster and with more personalized services, which are critical for helping people in crisis. We know that 988 is saving lives and helping millions of people. I hope anyone who feels alone, or that they are without options, knows that 988 is there to help."

Of the 10 million messages answered in the past two years, 1.7 million were texts—with 988 answering 51% more texts in the past 12 months than the year before, the HHS said.

Nearly 1.2 million of 988 calls were answered by the Veterans Crisis Line (VCL), through 988's Press 1 option.

"Our Veterans Crisis Line connects veterans to caring, qualified responders 24/7—and two years ago, we made it even easier for veterans in crisis and their loved ones to reach out for help by launching 988 then Press 1," VA Secretary Denis McDonough said in the HHS news release.

"One veteran lost to suicide is too many. We're supporting more [veterans](#) than ever through the 988 initiative and will not rest in our continued efforts to spread the word that this resource is available and saves lives."

The 988 network has been a bipartisanship affair, with former President Donald Trump signing the law that established the new number in 2020 and the Biden administration implementing the number and expanding the network of more than 200 call centers that typically operate 24/7.

So far, the Biden administration has funneled nearly \$1.5 billion into 988, while more than \$200 million in grants will be given to states in 2024 to support the work, HHS officials said Tuesday.

Statistics show the 988 line is needed: A 2022 [national survey](#) found that over 12 million adults and nearly 3.5 million adolescents had seriously considered suicide in the previous year, health officials said Tuesday. Meanwhile, nearly 1 in 5 adolescents reported symptoms of depression or anxiety in a [federal survey of teen health](#) from 2021 to 2022.

Still, only around a quarter of Americans are at least somewhat familiar with 988, according to [a poll](#) released this week by the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) and Ipsos.

Of the 3% of Americans who said they or a loved one had used 988 while in need, roughly 70% said they received adequate help, the poll found.

"We need that to be 10 in 10," Hannah Wesolowski, chief advocacy officer of the National Alliance on Mental Illness, told the New York Times. "You usually only get one bite at the apple when someone is reaching out for help."

**More information:** If you or someone you love is in crisis, reach out

to the [988 line](#).

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