

Spike in suicide calls due to economy

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(AP) -- Economic woes are weighing heavily on some Americans - so much so that the federal government is boosting financial support for suicide prevention centers around the nation.

Richard McKeon, the lead health adviser for [suicide](#) prevention at the Substance Abuse and [Mental Health](#) Services Administration, says calls to suicide crisis centers have increased sharply in the past year - with more than 57,000 calls in July alone. He said about a quarter of the calls were linked to economic distress.

McKeon said SAMHSA plans to provide more than \$1 million in additional money this year to help up to 20 crisis centers facing a big uptick in the number of calls for help as well as possible state and local budget cuts.

"We know that every single day, there are people calling who are in the midst of a [suicide attempt](#)," McKeon said in an interview late Tuesday. "Any delay in getting that call answered could be tragic."

SAMHSA helps fund the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, which routes calls to about 140 crisis centers across the country that provide suicide prevention services. McKeon says it usually provides a grant for the lifeline of about \$2.9 million a year.

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is 1-800-273-TALK.

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