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OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

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## **VERMONT ADOPTS 9-8-8 PHONE NUMBER FOR MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT AND CRISIS**

### *New Line Available Starting July 16*

Waterbury, Vt. – Starting July 16, Vermont is launching the 9-8-8 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline. Callers will be immediately connected to compassionate, caring counselors who are trained to provide support for individuals experiencing everything from emotional distress to a mental health crisis. While they are trained to treat and address suicidality, it is not only for those individuals in crisis.

The 9-8-8 Lifeline is also not only for those experiencing challenges with their own mental health. If you are the family member, loved one or friend of someone whom you believe might need help, counselors are trained and ready to answer your call.

Beginning July 16, people can access the Lifeline by calling 9-8-8. It is free, available 24/7, and confidential.

The Vermont Department of Mental Health (DMH) has been working since 2019 with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and Vibrant Emotional Health to build and bolster in-state Lifeline call centers in preparation for the transition to 9-8-8.

“When we started this process over two years ago, Vermonters who called the Lifeline were routed to call centers in nearby states,” said DMH Deputy Commissioner Alison Krompf, the department’s statewide lead on suicide prevention. “Now we have Vermonters who are trained and ready to talk 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. These are caring professionals who want to help.”

The Veterans Crisis Line remains available by calling 9-8-8 and pressing 1. Callers who speak Spanish can press 2, and the national system provides interpretation services for over 150 additional languages.

“We have a strong system of care with many supports available,” said DMH Commissioner Emily Hawes. “The transition to 9-8-8 is another step forward in the path to providing accessible, low barrier supports for all Vermonters who need help.”

Vermonters can also text “VT” to 741741 to get help and dial or text 833-888-2557 to connect with peer support through Pathways Vermont.

These services were detailed at Governor Scott’s press conference on Tuesday, where state officials and a mental health provider discussed the impacts of the pandemic and world events on the mental health and well-being of Vermonters. Governor Scott said, “What I hope Vermonters take away from this discussion is: It’s okay to not feel okay. Because you’re not alone, and there’s nothing to be ashamed of in getting some help or just taking some time to care for yourself. I also want people to know there is still a lot of good out there, and there is always reason for hope.”

[For more on this discussion, you can click here to view the Governor’s weekly press conference.](#)

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