



## Commonwealth of Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services

Andy Beshear, Governor

Eric Friedlander, Secretary

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Beth Fisher  
(502) 229-6529  
Beth.Fisher@ky.gov

### **State Expands Crisis Services for Kentuckians at Risk of Suicide**

*Pathways Community Mental Health Center Gains Accreditation as State-Based  
Suicide Prevention Lifeline*

**FRANKFORT, Ky.** (Nov. 10, 2020) – The Kentucky Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental, and Intellectual Disabilities (DBHDID), an agency of the Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS), today announced an additional Community Mental Health Center (CMHC) has been added to the list of accredited agencies serving as National Suicide Prevention Lifeline call centers within the state.

Pathways, Inc., a CMHC which serves Bath, Boyd, Carter, Elliott, Greenup, Lawrence, Menifee, Montgomery, Morgan and Rowan counties, recently completed the accreditation process and is now providing call center services for Kentuckians.

“Every person on the Pathways, Inc. team is a hero,” said Gov. Andy Beshear. “You are helping others – and in many cases, saving their lives – during their moment of greatest need. I want all Kentuckians to know that when they’re struggling, there is always someone they can call.”

Kentuckians can reach the NSPL by dialing 1-800-273-8255 (TALK).

Pathways Inc. joins eight other CMHCs in the state, including: The Adanta Group; Cumberland River Behavioral Health; Four Rivers Behavioral Health; LifeSkills, Inc.; Mountain Comprehensive Care Center; Pennyroyal Center; RiverValley Behavioral Health; and Seven Counties Services, serving as call centers for the Lifeline [supporting their respective regions](#).

“The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is a vital component of the safety net for those at risk of suicide,” said CHFS Secretary Eric Friedlander.

Calls to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline by Kentucky residents have increased 3% for 2020, compared to the same period in 2019.

“Due to the stressors and additional anxieties created by the COVID-19 pandemic, we know crisis and suicide prevention and intervention services are more vital than ever. We are pleased to see that Kentucky’s capacity to respond to individuals in crisis continues to grow,” Friedlander said.

The National Suicide Prevention 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, seven days a week.

Calls made to the Lifeline are routed to a local crisis center based on location and/or area code of the caller. If the closest crisis center isn't able to answer the call, the call is rerouted to a backup center.

“The Lifelines are an invaluable service and have greatly increased our capacity to respond to the needs of individuals experiencing an emotional or behavioral health crisis,” said DBHDID Commissioner Wendy Morris. “No call goes unanswered. While some may be answered by centers out of state, we are committed to building Kentucky’s ability to respond locally and are very pleased to add another CMHC to our list of Lifeline crisis center providers.”

Crisis call centers have served thousands of Kentuckians:

- In 2018, Kentucky responded to 30,964 calls of the 2.5 million across the United States.

- Nearly 40% of those callers accessed services through the Veteran's Crisis Line.
- Nearly 160 accessed services through the Spanish Language Line.
- On average, Kentucky residents call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 350 times each week.
- A newly approved, national three-digit number, 988, will go online in July 2022 and make accessing mental health and suicide prevention resources as easy as calling 911 for physical health care.

Expanding Kentucky-based Lifeline crisis call centers to the Pathway region was made possible following a grant award from Vibrant Emotional Health, which provided over \$9 million in funding to 12 states to expand crisis line capacity. Awardees are expected to reach in-state answer rates of 80%, with an ultimate goal of achieving at least a 90% in-state answer rate following the grant period.

**-30-**

*The Cabinet for Health and Family Services is home to most of the state's human services and health care programs, including the Department for Medicaid Services, the Department for Community Based Services the Department for Public Health, the Department for Aging and Independent Living and the Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities. CHFS is one of the largest agencies in state government, with nearly 8,000 full- and part-time employees located across the Commonwealth focused on improving the lives and health of Kentuckians.*