NAMI New Hampshire released the following statement from Executive Director Kenneth Norton:

Statement on Unanimous FCC Vote Supporting 3-Digit Number for National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
July 17, 2020

“As a member of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline Steering Committee, I have been intimately involved in efforts over the last several years to create a 3-digit number for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. The unanimous vote by the Federal Communications Commission on July 16, 2020, supporting the designation of 988 for that purpose, is a historic and significant step forward.

As advocacy efforts for this initiative evolved, it was clear the 3-digit number needs to serve as a mental health crisis line, as well as a suicide prevention hotline. In the future, individuals and families experiencing a mental health crisis will have another option besides calling 911 or going to an Emergency Department.

NAMI NH will continue to advocate for statewide mobile crisis response teams in New Hampshire and the technological connectivity so that mobile crisis teams can be deployed via the new 3-digit number.

While the FCC vote propelled this initiative forward, it is currently stalled in Congress. The bipartisan Suicide Hotline Designation Act S.2661 passed the Senate unanimously on a voice vote in May, but the bill is currently stalled by partisan disagreements around additional COVID relief.

I remain optimistic that the bill will ultimately pass, be signed by the President, and receive the necessary funding support for the 2-year process required to make the number operational. In the meantime, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline number remains 1-800-273-8255 (answered locally by Headrest in Lebanon, NH). Text NAMI to 741741 for the Crisis Text Line.”

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