

Date: July 6, 2022

From: Secretary (00)

Subj: Intra-Department Collaboration Needed to Prepare for Upcoming Veterans Crisis Line Transition to “Dial 988 then Press 1” (VIEWS 7564373)

To: VA Web Governance Board
Office of Information and Technology (005)
Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs (002)
Veterans Health Administration (10)
Veterans Benefits Administration (20)
National Cemetery Administration (40)

1. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) administers the Veterans Crisis Line (VCL) through the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (Lifeline) national network. Veterans can currently reach VCL by calling the 10-digit Lifeline phone number, (1-800-273-8255), and then pressing 1 to be connected to responders trained to understand the unique needs and challenges of Veterans.
2. The National Suicide Hotline Designation Act, signed into law in 2020 authorized 988 as the new three-digit number for the Lifeline. Because of VA’s partnership with the Lifeline, VCL is affected by this transition to a new number.
3. All telephone service providers in the U.S. must activate 988 no later than July 16, 2022. However, many providers have chosen to implement the service sooner. Once a Veteran's telephone service provider makes 988 available, Veterans can use this new option by dialing 988, then pressing 1 to contact VCL. After the “Dial 988 then Press 1” activation, Veterans can still use the 10-digit number and Press 1 to reach VCL.
4. VA is leading the comprehensive communications initiative, including proactive national outreach, to inform internal and external stakeholders about “Dial 988 then Press 1”. Prior to July 16, 2022, a communications toolkit and downloadable materials will be available through the VA [internal SharePoint site](#). The communications toolkit includes a checklist of actions to take regarding the “Dial 988 then Press 1” transition (such as adding agenda items to standing calls and updating websites, applications, materials, etc.). The downloadable graphics and logo files should be used to update your digital materials and websites to ensure the “Dial 988 then Press 1” transition is clearly communicated. Updates to external websites should be pushed live on July 16, 2022, and every effort should be taken to complete no later than July 31, 2022. After launching on July 16, “Dial 988 then Press 1” materials will be available to download on [VeteransCrisisLine.net](#).

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5. It is vital that we begin preparing so all internal and external VA and partner materials are revised to show the new number immediately upon nationwide 988 activation.

6. The work you do for VA is critical to our mission of preventing Veteran suicide. Therefore, you are strongly encouraged to contact the VCL Action Team at: VCLActionTeam@va.gov with questions, comments or concerns throughout this transition process.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "DMcDonough", written in a cursive style.

Denis McDonough