

Support DCF's Request for Sustainable Funding for Florida's 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline System

- Florida's 13 Lifeline Call Centers are saving lives. Between October 2022 and May 2024, more than 2,000 suicides were interrupted by trained call-takers and 72,028 callers were connected to appropriate behavioral health care.
- Since the launch of 988 in 2022, call centers have managed increasing call volumes without adequate funding for staffing and infrastructure, a need that will only grow with upcoming geo-routing and the addition of text and chat services.
- As of May 2024, the in-state answer rate was 78%. DCF estimated that an additional 164 crisis counselors would have been needed to achieve a 90% answer rate.
- To sustain these critical services, DCF is requesting an additional recurring \$3.3 million for counselor staffing, improved infrastructure, and outreach efforts essential to the Lifeline's effectiveness.

End Homelessness Among People Living with Serious Mental Illness by Creating more Permanent Supportive Housing

- Permanent supportive housing is a documented evidence-based practice for ending homelessness.
- In 2021, the Corporation for Supportive Housing in a Statewide Needs Assessment determined that Florida had a need for 12,811 units of PSH for various disabled populations. Address this need by planning to provide more supportive housing commensurate with Florida's population growth.
- Supportive housing is cost-effective. The cost of serving a person in supportive housing is half the cost of a shelter, a quarter the cost of being in prison and a tenth the cost of a state psychiatric hospital bed.

Close the Coverage Gap to Improve Behavioral Health Access for Adults Aged 18-25

- Unlike other serious medical conditions, the lifelong issues of serious mental illnesses and substance use disorders often begin in teen and young adult years.
- 14.1% of young adults ages 18-25 have no insurance. Without access to care, uninsured young adults who experience serious mental illness and/or substance use disorders are likely to drop out of school, become homeless or die by suicide. Access to early intervention can save these lives.
- Ask AHCA to apply for a waiver for young adults who are ineligible for their own or their parent's insurance.

Support the Recommendations of Florida's Commission on Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders

- The Commission, made up of appointees from the Senate, House and Governor's Office, as well as numerous subject matter experts, is the first such Commission assembled since 1999.
- This expert group is studying various aspects of Florida's "broken" mental health system in depth and making actionable recommendations for improvement.
- The final report of recommendations is being prepared and will be presented to the Governor and Legislature on Jan. 1, 2025.

Ensure Families, Peers, and Individuals Affected by Behavioral Health Conditions Are Central to Policymaking at All Levels: Their Lived Experiences Are Essential for Informed Decision-Making and Creating Effective Solutions to Improve the System of Care.