

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Maine FrontLine WarmLine Now Available to Support Maine School Staff

*To support Maine school staff, Mills Administration announces expansion of support line for Maine's frontline workers on World Teacher's Day.*

The “**Maine FrontLine WarmLine**” is now expanding its services to include Maine’s educators and school staff. The Maine FrontLine WarmLine is a phone support service that provides Maine’s essential health care workers, first responders, and now school staff with help in managing the stress of providing essential services during our fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. The volunteers help callers address concerns with anxiety, irritability, poor sleep, grief or worry and, if needed, connect them with additional supports.

The FrontLine WarmLine is staffed by volunteer professionals activated through [Maine Responds](#), which includes licensed psychiatrists, psychologists, clinical counselors, social workers, and nurse practitioners, and has now been expanded to include retired teachers and educators. It [launched](#) in April as a joint effort of the Maine Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Maine Department of Public Safety's Emergency Medical Services (EMS), Maine Association of Psychiatric Physicians, Opportunity Alliance, Maine Psychological Association, and the Maine Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers. The Maine Department of Education, the Maine Education Association (MEA), and MEA Retired now join the collaboration to expand the service to school staff, including educators, school administrators, and school staff in facilities, transportation, and food services, among many others.

“As the daughter of a school teacher, I have seen firsthand the hard work and dedication that this profession requires,” said Governor Janet Mills. “While our educators deserve thanks and support every day, it is fitting that on World Teachers Day we expand Maine’s FrontLine WarmLine to provide an additional resource to the school staff who are serving Maine students.”

**The FrontLine WarmLine is available from 8 AM to 8 PM, 7 days a week by calling (207) 221-8196 or texting 898-211**

“On World Teachers Day, we recognize the heroic efforts and daily miracles that are occurring in our schools” said Commissioner Pender Makin. “The faculty and staff who are serving the students of Maine are facing unprecedented challenges, and the warmline can offer a listening ear and support to those heroes in the classrooms, the cafeterias and on the buses. We cannot thank you enough for all you are doing.”

As Maine’s schools have returned to serve our children, families, and communities, they also have faced multiple challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic. Teachers and school staff are working tirelessly to provide education and support services to children across Maine. The work of providing these services during the COVID-19 pandemic can take an emotional toll on those who are juggling their own families, the creation of multiple curricula, nutrition programming, providing social emotional support, cleaning and other facilities needs, and transportation to and from school, among the multiple other support services that students receive at school. It is equally imperative that they are provided with support and resources to continue in their professions. Starting today educators and school staff are encouraged to call the **Maine FrontLine WarmLine at (207) 221-8196 or by texting 898-211 between 8 AM to 8 PM, 7 days a week.**

“Maine's first responders, health care providers and school staff face significant stress as they serve on the front lines of this pandemic,” said **Dr. Jessica Pollard, director of the DHHS Office of Behavioral Health**. “The FrontLine WarmLine is here to support them in taking care of themselves as they care for so many others.”

“Our educators are rising up to deal with the many difficulties our schools are facing now,” said Grace Leavitt, President of the Maine Education Association. “They are working even harder than ever before to support Maine’s students in their continued learning. This program can go a long way in helping to support our educators as they confront the ongoing challenges that COVID-19 has caused.”

The FrontLine WarmLine is a central component of the Office of Behavioral Health’s StrengthenME program, which supports mental health and resiliency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

For those who are not health care workers, first responders or school staff but are experiencing emotional distress, several other 24/7 [resources](#) are available:

- Statewide Crisis Line: **888-568-1112**
- [Intentional Peer Support Warmline](#) to speak with staff who have lived experience with mental health conditions: **866-771-9276**
- Suicide Hotline: **800-273-TALK (800-273-8255)**
- **211** and [211maine.org](http://211maine.org) can provide general COVID-19 information, including how to access behavioral health and social service resources
- Maine DHHS Office of Behavioral Health [resources guide](#)

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