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Contact: Katie Mintz
Communications
651-431-5605
Kathryn.Mintz@state.mn.us

TXT4Life program expands reach with \$1M boost in funding *Program highlighted during National Suicide Prevention Week Sept. 7-13*

Help is now a text message away anytime for Minnesotans experiencing crisis or contemplating suicide. [TXT4Life](#) is expanding hours and outreach thanks to a \$1 million boost from the state, and is on track to respond to more than 10,000 text messages this year.

“Every loss of life by suicide is a tragedy. We want people to reach out when they need help, and today, when almost everyone has a cell phone in their pocket or purse, TXT4Life is an important part of our mental health crisis response system in Minnesota,” said Human Services Commissioner Lucinda Jesson, who visited the Richfield-based TXT4Life center today during National Suicide Prevention Week.

As of Sept. 1, Minnesotans who text “Life” to 61222 receive crisis counseling and connections to local resources 24 hours a day, seven days a week from trained counselors at non-profit Canvas Health, which operates TXT4Life. With additional funding, the organization has also added outreach and awareness efforts in 10 counties in southwestern Minnesota. Thirty-nine counties, eight reservations and two college campuses across the state are now served by regional coordinators. The text service is available to any Minnesotan regardless of county residence.

Initially geared at teens, TXT4Life will also begin targeting middle-age white male and Native American populations, both of which have seen significant growth in suicide rates nationwide in recent years.

“Everyone, no matter their age or background, benefits when their feelings are validated and acknowledged,” said Matt Eastwood, Canvas Health Chief Executive Officer. “TXT4Life allows people to use a medium they already trust to work through difficult moments of crisis, and to get tools to move forward and access long-term help. The act of reaching out during a crisis is difficult, but in this case, you just need to push ‘send’.”

Suicide is the ninth leading cause of death in Minnesota. In 2013, 880 Minnesotans died of suicide, a more than 30 percent increase from 660 in 2012, according to the most recent data available from the Minnesota Department of Health.

Mental health crisis services are a key part of the state’s mental health system and suicide prevention efforts. TXT4Life works in partnership with 24-hour crisis call services available in all Minnesota counties and tribal reservations, mobile crisis response services that provide face-

to-face intervention, as well as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. A directory of [mental health crisis phone numbers by county in Minnesota](#) is available on the Department of Human Services website. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, operated in Minnesota by Canvas Health, can be reached toll-free at 800-273-TALK (8255). Canvas Health's Crisis Connection 24/7 statewide crisis line can be reached at 612-379-6363 or 866-379-6363.

The additional \$1 million in funding for TXT4Life was part of a historic \$46 million investment in Minnesota's mental health system by Gov. Mark Dayton and the Legislature in 2015. The funding is helping provide a comprehensive range of mental health care across the state, from prevention and early intervention, to long-term supports for recovery. More information is in a [fact sheet about strengthening Minnesota's mental health system \(PDF\)](#).