

News Release:

From: Carlton County Public Health and Human Services

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New Technology Used in Preventing Suicide for Youth

Next Txt (text) 4 Life, as it has been termed, will link youth from Northeastern MN Region to a texting hotline for suicide prevention. Partnerships around the region and state have formed a network providing this essential service to youth. Thanks to a grant received by Carlton County Public Health and Human Services, Carlton County Children and Family Services Collaborative, and HSI Crisis Connection - the MN affiliate of the National Suicide Prevention hotline, expanded services for suicide prevention response will be available. HSI Crisis Connection has been responding to the needs of suicidal individuals through the telephone number: **1-800- 273-TALK (8255)** and now will expand its services by responding to text messages through the following: texting the word **LIFE** to the number **839863**. "Text crisis counseling" will be available initially from 3:00 PM to 12:00 midnight seven days a week, and will be expanded to 24/7 coverage early in 2012. The federal government's Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) awarded this grant to Carlton County in August, 2011.

Northeastern MN has a disproportionately higher concentration of suicides in the state; some of the Counties rank in the top 10 in the state. Local citizens and community leaders have worked over the past three years to identify better ways to implement suicide prevention strategies, yet still identified a need to go beyond traditional approaches. Students in the region have also been proactive in developing education and prevention efforts, including a student group in Moose Lake called LIFE (Life Is For Everyone), to bring awareness to the issue. We are excited to announce that through these partnerships, with a broad coalition being invested, a new approach and desire to move to life saving techniques using new technology and linking kids to appropriate services, we were able to jointly write and have received this national grant through the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA); a first of its kind in the State of MN! This \$1.4 million grant will allow services to be provided to youth throughout the region.

- Our efforts extend to partnerships in the Arrowhead Region and to Non Profits operating locally and within the State.
- Impacted Counties: Carlton, Cook, Lake, St. Louis, Aitkin, Itasca, Koochiching
- Impacted Tribes: Fond du Lac, Grand Portage, Bois Fort, and Red Lake
- Non Profits: Human Development Center (HDC), HSI Crisis Connection (MN affiliate - Suicide Prevention Lifeline services), Northland Counseling Center, Range Mental Health Center, and Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota

The grant: **Next Txt 4 LIFE** implements a youth focus, expanding on the state suicide lifeline operated by *HSI Crisis Connection*, by adding texting service for suicide prevention. The outreach will begin with 7th – 12th graders in Carlton County schools, expanding to the rest of the schools in the seven county Arrowhead region in the months ahead.

- This mode of communication is more closely aligned with the needs of today's youth
- Grantees will Implement a social media marketing campaign
- Establish suicide response training for each school and community and with people whom students naturally connect to
- Strengthen Collaborative Infrastructure with training for Regional service providers in the Northeast Minnesota
- Develop evidence-based youth suicide prevention plan for NE MN to increase protective factors while reducing risk factors for suicide using community partners
- Involve and Train Student groups in each participating school
- Outcome data will be evaluated by the University of Minnesota Medical School & Center for Rural Mental Health Studies

Please refer questions and gather additional information by contacting Carlton County Public Health and Human Services. *Primary Contact Name:* Dave Lee, Director, 218-878-2844, dave.lee@co.carlton.mn.us
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