



Ms. Marlene Dortch
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

June 5, 2017

Dear Ms. Dortch,

On behalf of NAMI NH, The National Alliance On Mental Illness, I am writing to urge you to assign an N11 3 digit phone line for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. NAMI NH's mission is to improve the lives of all people impacted by mental illness and suicide. The US Center for Disease Control issued a report in June of 2018 showing increases in suicide rates in 49 out of 50 states between 1999-2016., New Hampshire was listed as having the third largest increase among all states. Both of these statistics demonstrate unequivocally that suicide is a significant public health issue in the US, and that we need to look at innovative approaches to reduce the human, social, and economic burden of suicide in our state and in our country.

Governor Chris Sununu, has described New Hampshire as being in the midst of a "mental health crisis." The state is taking significant steps during this legislative session to address this crisis, however NAMI NH firmly believes that the time for a dedicated mental health and suicide prevention crisis line is long overdue. Individuals and families need an alternative to calling 911 during a mental health crisis and this can be achieved through having an N11 designation for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline which can provide immediate access to mental health support via an N11 number

We strongly disagree with the overall recommendation of the North American Numbering Council's (NANC's) report to the FCC to expand the 211 code to include crisis and suicide prevention. 211 is an information and resource line and NOT a crisis line. Individuals and families need an easy to remember N11 number that is a dedicated mental health and suicide prevention crisis line with answered by individuals who are *qualified, trained and certified* to effectively respond to mental health emergencies and prevent suicide deaths. These situations are often real emergencies where timely and effective response can mean the difference between life or death. The increasing call volume seen by the Lifeline demonstrates that the public recognizes and utilizes to the Lifeline as a mental health/suicide prevention line. Combining this with 211 would create confusion and miss an important opportunity which was almost unanimously endorsed by Congress to establish a dedicated suicide prevention/mental health crisis line.

On behalf of NAMI NH, I urge the FCC to recognize the important opportunity to address one of the leading and *preventable* causes of death in our country. By designating a distinct N11 three digit number for the National Suicide Prevention and Veteran's Crisis Line.

Very respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kenneth Norton".

Kenneth Norton LICSW
Executive Director

Find Help, Find Hope.

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