

I write to advocate that SAMHSA retain permanent control of 1-800-SUICIDE. As an accredited crisis center in the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline network, we have found SAMHSA leadership and control of this line to be outstanding, dependable and professional. When the Kristin Brooks Center managed the line, we found their work to be dangerously inconsistent and unskilled.

Quality technology is essential to this line. The 1-800-SUICIDE network under SAMHSA provides an accurate and timely routing system. Calls are promptly and correctly routed to the nearest crisis center. Their technology network is efficient and consistent. For callers in crisis, this level of service is crucial. When KBHC controlled the line, calls were frequently misrouted and call volume poorly managed.

SAMHSA has sought to build relationships with crisis centers, seeking active involvement and input from crisis centers. Active agreements, modest compensation and a national and regional back-up system have been created to enhance service and engage those of us who take those calls-24 hours a day, seven days a week, every night and every holiday. KBHC never seemed to feel it was necessary to engage us in a dialogue or to support our work despite our critical role in the 1-800-SUICIDE line. KBHC has never attempted to work with crisis centers, develop MOU's or in any way partner with us and yet expects us to handle whatever and however their calls are sent to us. Crisis centers are NOT passive receivers of calls. We must manage our call volume with staffing and training. We provide skilled and compassionate care to suicidal callers, many of us even engaging in follow-up calls with suicidal callers over an extended period of time to enhance safety and increase connectedness.

KBHC would have you believe that this is merely an issue of paying a phone bill. Not true! This is about public safety and ethics. KBHC is not competent to handle the 1-800-SUICIDE line and we implore you to give the line permanently to SAMHSA. Their work and partnership have been exemplary.