



Michelle Lujan Grisham
Governor

Sonya L. Smith
Cabinet Secretary

NEWS RELEASE

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August 10, 2022

New Three-Digit National Suicide Prevention & Crisis “Lifeline” Phone Number Now in Operation

New 9-8-8 number has a veteran/military component

(SANTA FE)— A new three-digit phone number has replaced the existing and often hard-to-remember ten-digit national suicide prevention and crisis phone number.

The new number to call is 9-8-8, and it features a military & veteran feature.

Veterans or service members facing a crisis can simply **dial 9-8-8, and press option “1”** to be immediately linked to the same U.S. [Department of Veterans Affairs](#) (VA) support system featured with the old phone number. The old number will remain active and will reroute calls to the new 988 system.

Mental health advocates are hoping calling 988 will replace emergency calls to 9-1-1 for mental health crises. According to VA, while 9-1-1 dispatchers are prepared to send first responders and support callers during an emergency, staffers linked to the 988 number are counselors specifically trained to immediately handle distraught callers, access records, and send help.

New Mexico Joins National Veterans Suicide Prevention Program

New Mexico has also joined the *Governor’s Challenge to Prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans, and Their Families*.

This is a collaboration between states to develop plans in their states to implement the [National Strategy for Preventing Veteran Suicide](#), which provides a framework for identifying priorities, organizing efforts and developing veteran suicide prevention strategies and outreach at the state level.

The New Mexico Department of Veterans Services (DVS) is the lead agency in New Mexico for this collaboration. DVS Cabinet Secretary Sonya Smith and DVS Field

Services Division Director Robin Wilson were in Alexandria, VA, last week for a meeting with other states' Governor's Challenge representatives.

"The new national 988 phone number is a tremendous development," said Secretary Smith. "But we will do more here in New Mexico. I am honored that Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham has tasked our agency to lead the state's veteran and service member suicide prevention effort. We've learned a lot from our initial meeting and will be implementing a plan soon."

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The New Mexico Department of Veterans Services

The New Mexico Department of Veterans Services (DVS) provides support and services to New Mexico's 148,000 veterans and their families. DVS treats every veteran, regardless of their rank achieved during military service, with the respect and gratitude befitting someone who has served our country. We strive every day to live up to our agency's official motto: *Serving Those Who Served*

Respectfully,

Ray Seva

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