
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions
Provincial Health Services Authority

Province strengthens mental health crisis lines

VICTORIA – The Province is enhancing supports in order to provide even better crisis line services for British Columbians.

Planned enhancements to crisis line services include additional responders to increase crisis line capacity to answer calls, improved recruitment and retention strategies, upgraded, improved technology and standardized training for call responders.

The Province has directed the Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA) to oversee crisis line services, and contract directly with all crisis line providers through the Crisis Line Enhancement Project.

“Unprecedented emergencies like the floods, the poisoned drug crisis and COVID-19 pandemic means crisis lines are busier than ever,” said Sheila Malcolmson, Minister of Mental Health and Addictions. “I am grateful for the dedication and tireless work of crisis line workers. Their efforts and commitment have saved lives. Our government is acting with urgency to ensure every call is answered and no one is left behind.”

B.C.’s crisis line services will continue to be offered throughout the province. The PHSA will work with health authority partners and crisis line providers over the coming months to transition to a single service contract for each health authority. This will create a more co-ordinated provincial system and provide British Columbians with more sustainable and reliable crisis line services.

The Province is supporting this Crisis Line Enhancement Project with an additional \$2.35 million in annual funding for crisis lines, which nearly doubles the current investment in this critical service.

“The PHSA is proud to be working with our partners in the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions and the Ministry of Health, as well as the dedicated crisis line providers who have worked so hard in very challenging circumstances to improve B.C.’s crisis line system,” said Susan Wannamaker, executive vice-president of clinical service delivery, PHSA. “Crisis line services have never been more important, and thanks to this investment from the provincial government, we will soon be able to provide an even better service to British Columbians.”

More than \$1.6 million in additional one-time funding has been provided to crisis line centres since July 2020 to help crisis lines improve their call capacity during the pandemic. Funds were primarily used to pay for additional call responders, as well as technology enhancements to improve call response services.

The provincial co-ordination of crisis lines under PHSA will come into effect in the spring of

2022, and new contracts with service providers will be in place in the fall. The Province's commitment to crisis lines is part of A Pathway to Hope and its vision and commitment to build a better and more comprehensive mental health care system in B.C.

Learn More:

For more info on Crisis Lines, visit: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/managing-your-health/mental-health-substance-use/crisis-and-information-lines>

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