



SUSANA MARTINEZ, GOVERNOR
BRENT EARNEST, SECRETARY

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New Mexico Crisis and Access Line Helping More New Mexicans Connect with Needed Services and Support

Santa Fe, NM — Today, New Mexico Human Services Department (HSD) Secretary Brent Earnest announced that the New Mexico Crisis and Access Line (NMCAL) is helping more New Mexicans find the help, services, and support they need for mental health crises such as anxiety, depression, substance abuse, and others. NMACL fielded 2,952 calls last month alone, 16,000 in the first six months of this year, and more than 21,000 calls in 2015.

“The hotline helps connect our most vulnerable family members, friends, and neighbors with the help they need,” said Governor Susana Martinez. “When someone in need calls into the crisis hotline, they’re given compassion and support, and connected to more opportunities and resources to get much-needed help. It’s important that we keep supporting a tool that is so vital to New Mexicans in need.”

Staffed by mental health professionals who can respond to a crisis 24 hours per day and 7 days per week, NMCAL is available statewide and toll free at 1-855-NMCRISIS (1-855-662-7474). The hotline has received more than 56,000 calls since it began operation in 2013. The top three reasons given for calling are anxiety, depression and suicidal thoughts. Most callers report having a reduced level of distress after calling and are referred to a community service provider if appropriate.

In November of 2015, Governor Martinez announced an expansion of the Crisis and Access Line, including additional funding and certified peer counselors who provide confidential non-crisis support from trained specialists for New Mexicans. The specialists are certified by HSD, and have struggled with their own behavioral health or substance abuse issues. Peer support specialists provided 1,028 hours of direct service on 3,331 calls in 2015.

"As awareness of the New Mexico Crisis and Access Line continues to grow, so will the number of New Mexicans who use this important tool when they or a loved one are experiencing a mental health crisis," HSD Secretary Brent Earnest said. "Coupled with the 75 percent increase in access to behavioral health services for New Mexicans, NMCAL is an integral part of the support network for mental health and substance abuse issues in our state."

NMCAL staff is professionally trained to help support a person experiencing a crisis and establish a safety plan that includes referral to the appropriate behavioral health resources in their community. The NMCAL coordinates with local provider agencies, respite, warm lines, emergency rooms, law enforcement agencies and correctional facilities.

In May, a joint effort between HSD and Bernalillo County was announced to allow 911 callers in unincorporated areas of Bernalillo County to transfer to the hotline to speak with a counselor. This program provides callers with the appropriate response of services to their mental health needs.

New Mexico continues to improve quality of and access to treatment, care, and other behavioral health services. The state improved ten spots in Mental Health America's annual rankings in 2015 and access to behavioral health services for New Mexicans has increased by 75 percent since 2013.

For more information, visit <http://www.nmcrisisline.com>.

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