



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
Prevention and Community Health
Post Office Box 47830
Olympia, Washington 98504-7830
711 Washington Relay Service

June 28, 2024

Greetings Honorable Tribal Leaders,

SUBJECT: Informative - Update on Native and Strong Lifeline Provision for Text and Chat Services

I am reaching out about the addition of [988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#) text and chat services for the Native and Strong Lifeline. In accordance with [Chapter 43.376 RCW](#), the Washington State [Centennial Accord of 1989](#), and [DOH Consultation and Collaboration Procedure](#), we are providing an **Informative - Update on Native and Strong Lifeline Provision for Text and Chat Services**.

Since November 2022, the Native and Strong Lifeline, administered by [Volunteers of America Western Washington \(VOAWW\)](#), has provided crisis call services to around 500 help-seekers each month. In March 2024, Governor Inslee signed the [Engrossed 2nd Substitute Senate Bill \(E2SSB\) 6251](#) into law. This [bill](#) authorizes DOH to coordinate with the [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration \(SAMHSA\)](#) and the national 988 administrator, [Vibrant Emotional Health](#), to offer "*services by text, chat, and other similar methods of communication to the same extent as does the general 988 crisis hotline,*"

Following this directive, DOH and VOAWW have requested authority from SAMHSA and Vibrant to begin offering text and chat services. Should authority be granted, Vibrant would develop technological changes to support text and chat routing, and DOH would use appropriated funding from E2SSB 6251 so VOAWW can plan and implement these services. DOH will continue to provide updates on this process.

For more information, contact 988 Program Supervisor, Elaina Perry, at elaina.perry@doh.wa.gov or 360-766-0191 or Office of Tribal Public Health and Relations Executive Director, Candice Wilson-Quatz'teanut, at candice.wilson@doh.wa.gov or 360-819-7626.

Sincerely,

Michele Roberts MPH, MCHES
Assistant Secretary
Division of Prevention and Community Health

Cc: Lacy Fehrenbach - Chief of Prevention, Safety and Health - Department of Health
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