



The Jesse Klump Memorial Fund, Inc.
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February 5, 2022

To members of the Maryland Senate Finance Committee,

The Jesse Klump Memorial Fund is the leading nonprofit serving citizens on the lower Eastern Shore by providing suicide prevention outreach and education and supporting those who are grieving after the loss of a loved one to suicide. Since the launch of the Jesse Klump Suicide Awareness & Prevention Program in 2011 we have taught “suicide prevention first aid” to over a thousand people, including healthcare professionals, educators, and laypeople.

I am writing to encourage you to vote to move SB241, the Behavioral Health Crisis Response Services 9-8-8 Trust Fund Bill, forward toward becoming law in this session.

Imagine yourself on a highway at 55mph and seeing a billboard that says “TO PREVENT A SUICIDE DIAL 800-273-TALK (8255),” or seeing the message on a banner behind a plane over the Ocean City beach. Then imagine yourself weeks later being faced with a loved one who is suicidal, or even feeling suicidal yourself. Are you going to remember that number? Instead, imagine only having to remember “988.” This is why we think the establishment of 988 as the national suicide prevention and behavioral health crisis number is the most important step in suicide prevention in decades.

Maryland’s current crisis hotline services do a wonderful job. The state suicide rates, by any measure, are lower than national rates. But like everything else, mental health and suicidality have been, and will continue to be, severely impacted by COVID-19, and call centers could be overwhelmed. It isn’t just a matter of compassion; it’s economics, too. The CDC estimates that every suicide in American bears a cost to the nation of over \$1 million. The approval of SB241, and the sustaining funding it will provide, will guarantee that Marylanders can find the resources they need to save lives.

Sincerely,

Kim A. Klump, President

Financial Support
provided by the
Humphreys Foundation
Ocean City MD



The *Jesse Klump Memorial Fund*, a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit corporation, exists to end the tragedy of suicide, to provide a place of healing for those who have lost loved ones to suicide, to financially support scholars of any age who have demonstrated a desire to make the world a better place through original, entrepreneurial community action, and to provide grants for training for healthcare and education professionals dedicated to suicide prevention and mental health.

ARE YOU CONSIDERING SUICIDE? WORRIED ABOUT SOMEONE? CALL 1-800-273-TALK

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