



TXT4Life Statewide Expansion

Description: TXT4LIFE is a suicide prevention resource which utilizes text messaging to provide counseling to those in crisis versus face to face or phone counseling. TXT4LIFE was created in response to changes in communication styles, from phone and face to face contacts to text messaging. In addition, it provides a greater level of anonymity resulting in more persons in crisis reaching out for help. The use of text messaging to immediately connect with crisis counselors is yielding much higher use of emergency services. Coupled with suicide prevention training, focused marketing of emergency numbers and getting emergency contacts saved in cell phones and other new media devices, the threshold for connecting during a suicidal crisis is lowered and more people get the help they need. In 2013 and 2015, the Minnesota legislature partially funded the expansion of Regional Coordinators in Minnesota from 7 to 54 counties (Central and southeast Minnesota recently added.) Texting response increased to 24/7 statewide.

The use of text messaging to immediately connect with crisis counselors is yielding much higher use of emergency services, from 30 up to 1,000+ per month. Coupled with suicide prevention training, focused marketing of emergency numbers and getting emergency contacts saved in cell phones and other new media devices, the threshold for connecting during a suicidal crisis is lowered and more people of all ages are getting the help they need. Over 50% of people accessing the service have had no other contact with the mental health system or social service programs. Recent statistics from the Minnesota Department of Health show a slight decrease in suicides in Minnesota for people under the age of 25, while most other age groups saw an increase in suicide rates.

Proposed Action/Solution: Expand Regional Coordinators to cover the entire state of Minnesota.

- Expansion to cover the remaining 33 counties in Minnesota
- Regional Coordinators would cover schools/populations in areas of approximately 300,000 in population. This would include partnership from the Department of Human Service, the Department of Health and the Department of Education to include:
 - School and community presentations;
 - Mobile Crisis Team information;
 - Suicide prevention information; and
 - Bullying prevention information.