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**Contact:**

Cassie Nichols

[cassie.nichols@ks.gov](mailto:cassie.nichols@ks.gov)

## **Governor Laura Kelly Celebrates the Launch of the 9-8-8 Mental Health Lifeline in Kansas**

*~~Starting July 16 Kansans Can Call 9-8-8 During Mental Health  
and Substance Abuse Emergencies~~*

**WICHITA** – Today, Governor Laura Kelly ceremonially signed Senate Bill 19, bipartisan legislation that launches 9-8-8 as the official 24/7 three-digit dialing code for the National Suicide and Crisis Lifeline. Beginning Saturday, July 16, Kansans and all Americans can call 9-8-8 during mental health and substance abuse emergencies. Governor Kelly joined Sedgwick County Commissioners, legislators, and local advocates for the celebration at the Sedgwick County Courthouse.

“With 9-8-8, we are on the path to reversing our country’s mental health crisis and getting Kansans the help they need,” **Governor Kelly said.** “Just as every American knows to call 9-1-1 in times of emergency, every American – and every Kansan – will soon know to call 9-8-8 when they or a loved one is facing a mental health or substance abuse crisis.”

Governor Kelly announced in January of this year that the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services (KDADS) received the Lifeline’s 9-8-8 State Planning Grant through the nonprofit Vibrant Emotional Health to develop plans to build the infrastructure for and grow access to the Lifeline’s new three-digit 9-8-8 number. Governor Kelly signed SB 19 in June so that going forward, each July 1 \$10 million in state general funds will be appropriated to fund 9-8-8 with no access fee for Kansans.

The new “9-8-8 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline” will connect callers to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and offer a broader range of services for people experiencing a mental health crisis or substance use crisis. Callers will be connected to resources in their local community and to in-person crisis services where available. Kansans who dial 9-8-8 will be routed to a local crisis specialist trained to address unique concerns and needs, which may include assessment, stabilization, referral, and follow-up.

“Kansas is the 14th state to fund 9-8-8 through legislation and we are excited for the national launch of 9-8-8,” **KDADS Behavioral Health Services Commissioner**

**Andrew Brown said.** “KDADS has been working throughout the Kelly Administration to increase the infrastructure in Kansas for suicide prevention and crisis intervention in preparation for 9-8-8. This will be the first of several milestones that will help Kansans experiencing a crisis get improved access to the help they need during a crisis.”

KDADS partnered with the Kansas Suicide Prevention HQ, Johnson County Mental Health, COMCARE of Sedgwick County, HealthSource Information Solutions, and TBD Solutions LLC, to develop clear roadmaps to address coordination, capacity, funding, and communications surrounding the launch of 9-8-8 and collaborated with state leadership, suicide prevention experts, people with lived experience, and others to create a 9-8-8 implementation plan and support the Lifeline’s operational, clinical, and performance standards that allow access to care.

Individuals will still be able to access the 10-digit National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-8255) after the July 16 implementation of 9-8-8. The current Lifeline and 9-8-8 will be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week via call, text, or chat. All phone service providers are required to connect callers who dial 9-8-8 to the Lifeline.

Photos from today’s ceremonial bill signing for media use can be found below:

- [Photo 1](#)
- [Photo 2](#)
- [Photo 3](#)

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