



State of Utah

GARY R. HERBERT  
*Governor*

SPENCER J. COX  
*Lieutenant Governor*

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

ANN SILVERBERG WILLIAMSON  
*Executive Director*

Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health

DOUG THOMAS  
*Director*

April 26, 2017

Congressman Chris Stewart  
U.S. House of Representatives  
323 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

RE: National Suicide Prevention Hotline Improvement Act of 2017

Dear Congressman Stewart,

It is with a hopeful heart I submit this letter of support on behalf of the Utah Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (DSAMH) for the proposed National Suicide Prevention Hotline Improvement Act.

Suicide is the 7<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death for Utahns overall and ranks 7<sup>th</sup> in the nation for suicide deaths. DSAMH is committed to our goal of zero suicides in Utah. In discussing how to achieve this goal, it was realized the complexity and accessibility in time of a mental health crisis was imperative. Utah, therefore, recently passed legislation enacting the creation of a statewide mental health crisis line commission to address this issue at the State level. The proposed National Suicide Prevention Hotline Improvement Act of 2017 which, 1) Requires the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), within 120 days, to study, in conjunction with the Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and to report to Congress on the designation of a 3-digit dialing code for a suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline system; 2) Requires the FCC to evaluate the N-1-1 dialing codes, as well as other 3-digit numbers for the use of this hotline; and 3) Requires the FCC's report to make recommendations to Congress on which number to designate, as well as the logistics and estimated costs associated with such a designation, aligns perfectly with Utah's efforts of available emergency assistance to individuals seeking help in a time of a mental health crisis.

Quick and easy access to crisis services in an emergency is beneficial and supports the comprehensive systemic approach Utah is taking to address suicide prevention. We fully support and look forward to working with you on this important lifesaving legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Doug Thomas".

Doug Thomas, M.S.W., LCSW  
Director