



NEWS RELEASE

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IDPH Suicide Prevention Grant Boosts Mental Health Offerings for Students

Second year of funding for DuPage High School District 88 will make it easier for students around the state to access treatment, services

SPRINGFIELD – A suicide prevention grant from the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) is paying for an expansion of mental health services that will make it easier for high school students across Illinois to access up to eight in-person or telehealth counseling sessions.

This is the third year of a planned five-year grant from IDPH to DuPage High School District 88. To date, DuPage has received nearly \$440,000 for the grant, which began as a way to provide “postvention” services after a student has attempted or committed suicide, in order to help other students and members of the community deal with the trauma. The funding has now been broadened to launch the portal which students around the state can use to make contact with a “care navigator” who can help connect the student to treatment services.

“Suicide prevention is an ongoing challenge that requires innovative solutions,” said IDPH Director Dr. Sameer Vohra. “We are proud to partner with the DuPage High School District to implement this forward-thinking initiative to get more services to where they are needed, and to give students access to help before they reach a crisis point.”

“Schools are on the frontlines of supporting student mental health,” said State Superintendent of Education Dr. Tony Sanders. “DuPage High School District 88’s creation of the postvention portal is a powerful example of how schools can step up to address the mental health needs of our students and communities. By launching this resource, alongside the expansion to telehealth services, DuPage is leading the way in ensuring that students across Illinois have the tools and support they need during their most vulnerable moments. Supporting student mental health is essential to helping them thrive both in and out of the classroom.”

“DuPage High School District 88 is a strong supporter of providing vital mental health services for our students, families and community. We are excited to be part of a grant to provide assistance and treatment,” said Dr. Jean Barbanette, Superintendent of DuPage High School District 88.

Some District 88 parents also offered their assessment of the service:

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- “This service is amazing - besides the cost being covered for some sessions, it was so timely after I completed the form and worked to match my son with a therapist in our area and one that takes my insurance. As I have searched for therapists in the past, it is a process that requires a lot of time and often is not fruitful. Thank you!”
- “Our teen has grown more comfortable sharing her feelings & finding ways to de-escalate her emotions and stress.”
- “My daughter comes home from her session and she is a changed person. Although she has a long way to go, I feel she is part of the family again.”

District 88 is working with an outside company, Referral GPS, to administer the phone line and secure web portal where students and their families can seek counseling and assistance. The company will provide “triage” of incoming inquiries and direct those seeking help to an appropriate clinical provider. Telehealth services will be made available, expanding access to care for students in remote areas who might have more difficulty arranging an in-person visit.

Students can access the service at [Adolescent Suicide Postvention | ReferralGPS](#) or by texting “HOME” to 741741. (Anyone in an emergency situation should contact the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline for immediate assistance.) All inquiries will be confidential. Referral GPS will report out aggregate statistics on use of the service to the school district for purposes of assessing the successful use of the grant funding.

The grant funding distributed by IDPH comes from the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), as part of the Garrett Lee Smith State/Tribal Youth Suicide Prevention and Early Intervention Program.

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