

MASS2-1-1 PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Help us Answer Every Call

Massachusetts - Call2Talk, the statewide mental health, emotional support, and suicide prevention line recently celebrated its fifth anniversary. Its beginnings were modest and meager which included an empty office with just two phones on the floor. However, the focus and determination to create a much-needed mental health program, raise awareness, and answer calls in MetroWest could not be denied.

Call2Talk has grown quickly during its first five years and has now become part of the United Way's statewide Mass2-1-1 platform. Within the first two years, Call2Talk was also certified as a member of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline Network, answering local calls through the National hotline. With calls now coming in from across the state, Call2Talk is almost at its tipping point, receiving more calls than it has the capacity to answer.

When asked what would help Vice President of Mass2-1-1 and Call2Talk Program Director Eileen Davis emphatically says "money and volunteers. "Volunteers are the backbone of what we do but dollars will support the growth we need. Technology is expensive, volunteer recruitment and training take hours of manpower and months to complete, and the need and demand are real. Our phones are ringing off the hook."

Last year Call2Talk volunteers answered 51,812 calls from Massachusetts residents who courageously reached out to this lifesaving service. That's up significantly from the 27,963 calls received in 2016. With more than 150 active and highly-trained volunteers, the program is being stretched to its limit. In a report last June by USA Today, that National Suicide Prevention Lifeline said it saw calls double from 2014 to 2017, an increase that coincides with rising suicide rates in the US. According to the latest statistics experts predict calls to programs like Call2Talk will continue to increase nationwide.

Volunteer information sessions are held regularly throughout the year in Framingham and the next session is scheduled on Thursday, May 16. Anyone interested in learning more about volunteer opportunities can call Eileen Davis at 508.370.4857 or email her at EileenD@Mass211.org.

Anyone in Massachusetts who would like to speak with Call2Talk can dial 2-1-1 and follow menu prompts or call 508.532.2255. If you prefer talk by text, text C2T to 741741.

If you would like to support Call2Talk, donations are accepted through their website at www.mass211.org/call2talk or by mailing a check to Call2Talk, 46 Park Street, Framingham, MA 01702.

Everyone struggles with something: sadness, loss, anxiety, even thoughts of suicide. As people across Massachusetts become more comfortable talking about their mental health, Call2Talk is here to listen.

Call2Talk is a confidential mental health, emotional support and suicide prevention call line that assists individuals and families through stressful times in their lives. Call2Talk's well trained call-takers offer compassionate, non-judgmental, emotional support to callers in need. Call2Talk partners with Crisis Text Line 24/7, providing texting access with the same level of support and information. Call2Talk also offers TeleCheck, a phone check-in service for isolated seniors who are experiencing the onset of a sudden life change, and the LOSSteam MetroWest, working with six local police departments to offer immediate on-site peer emotional support to suicide loss survivors.

Mass2-1-1 is a free, easy-to-remember phone number that connects Massachusetts residents with important services in their local communities. It can be used for non-emergency daily needs and in crisis situations. Every day highly trained Mass2-1-1 Information and Referral specialists are available to provide up-to-date information and referrals connecting residents to local health and human service programs in the neighborhoods where they live.

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