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Oregon Partnership, Multnomah County Team Up To Support National Suicide Prevention Week

(Portland, Oregon) With the backing of Oregon Partnership, The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners has proclaimed September 6 through September 12 as National Suicide Prevention Week in Multnomah County.

Reading the proclamation at today's Commission meeting and emphasizing the importance of suicide prevention, Oregon Partnership President/CEO Judy Cushing said that suicide is the second leading cause of death among Oregonians ages 10-24 and for each death by suicide, there are 25 attempts.

"The majority of suicidal individuals display signals or clues," Cushing read from the proclamation. "The risk of suicide is increased by more than 50% in depressed individuals and the risk of suicide in individuals with an alcohol problem is 50-70% higher than the general population."

But as the proclamation points out, "preventing suicide is possible through mental health and addiction treatment."

"All of us should know and act on the signs," added Cushing. "This is a community health problem, and we should all play a part in the solution. Awareness is key."

Oregon Partnership operates the state's Lifeline, a 24-hour suicide prevention line responding to callers in crisis and providing support, guidance and facilitating suicide rescue if necessary.

Because of the sour economy, the number of veterans returning home, and with OP's Lifeline now serving as the Northwest regional backup center,

Lifeline this past winter took more calls than OP's alcohol and drug crisis line.

The number of Lifeline calls received by OP in July of 2009 totaled 1,894. Calls from Multnomah County normally account for 40-50% of the statewide calls.

“Although we are accustomed to dealing with callers who have financial challenges,” explained OP crisis lines director, Leslie Storm, “the calls have become more alarming as people lost jobs, health insurance and faced losing their homes.”

OP staff and a 100 trained volunteers respond to more than 35,000 calls per year on its four crisis lines:

Lifeline – 800-273-TALK, 800-SUICIDE
Alcohol and Drug HelpLine – 800-923-HELP
YouthLine – 877-553-TEEN
Linea de Ayuda – 877-515-7848

Suicide Prevention Week includes World Suicide Prevention Day, September 10, 2009, which is recognized internationally and supported by the World Health Organization.