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*****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE FROM OREGON PARTNERSHIP*****

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CALLS TO CRISIS LINES SURGE DUE TO ECONOMY.... NO LETUP IN SIGHT

**DESPITE BETTER WEATHER, APRIL TRADITIONALLY SHOWS AN
UPTICK IN SUICIDE**

(Portland, Oregon) Calls to the state's 24-hour crisis and suicide prevention lines run by Oregon Partnership are coming in at a rate of about 50% higher than a year ago. And the economy is a major reason.

"It's been this way since September of last year," says Leslie Storm, Director of OP's Crisis Line Program. "It stands to reason that when the unemployment rate goes up and people are hurting financially, so does the tension level for more Oregonians."

OP reports a slight increase of calls in March 2009 compared to February 2009. Last month, 1,584 calls came into LifeLine (OP's suicide prevention line) and 1,111 calls came into HelpLine (OP's alcohol and drug crisis line).

In January 2009, the lines received 71% more calls than it did the previous January.

"I wish I could say that with spring, we'll see fewer calls," says Storm. "But people are always surprised to learn that normally, we see an upsurge in deaths by suicide in April. Those suffering from depression, for example, are energized to take action."

Psychologists point out that someone deeply depressed often lacks the energy to plan and follow through with a suicide attempt, but once a depressed person starts to come out of his or her depression a bit, there's enough energy to make a plan.

Storm adds that intervention is often sufficient for people to look for safe options and be available for those thinking of suicide.

OP's Suicide Prevention Line (1-800-273-TALK) is the state's only suicide crisis hotline certified by the American Association of Suicidology and is part of the National LifeLine Network.

Oregon Partnership's HelpLine (1-800-923-HELP) provides crisis intervention, including confidential alcohol and drug crisis counseling and treatment referral.

Operated by experienced staff and approximately 75 volunteers who undergo 56 hours of crisis line skills training, the four lines – including The YouthLine and Linea de Ayuda - are the lifeblood for those in crisis and feel they have nowhere else to turn.

For this past fiscal year, more than 25-thousand people received immediate assistance from this efficient and cost effective operation.