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

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RECORD NUMBER OF CALLS TO OREGON PARTNERSHIP'S SUICIDE INTERVENTION LINE

(Portland, Or) For the first time, Oregon Partnership (OP) is receiving more calls to its suicide intervention line, Lifeline, than to its drug and alcohol HelpLine.

OP's Lifeline received 18,619 calls in 2009 compared to 17,005 calls to HelpLine. For Lifeline, that's a record-breaking 65% increase in calls from the year before.

Last month alone, Lifeline received 1,777 calls.

"Unemployment continues to be at a record high, and that's a reason for so many callers being in crisis," said Leslie Storm, OP Crisis Lines Director. "And when unemployment benefits start disappearing, we expect the call volume to increase."

OP crisis lines staff and volunteers counsel suicidal callers and follow up personally, ensuring people are safe and offering ongoing support.

"Last month, we facilitated 28 rescue calls," said Storm. "These are callers we consider to be in imminent danger to themselves. Emergency services were contacted."

The Lifeline Call Center responds to callers in crisis, providing support, guidance and facilitating suicide rescue, if necessary.

A growing number of military veterans, soldiers and their families are turning to OP crisis lines for help. Over the past 18 months, OP has taken aggressive steps to strengthen the safety net for soldiers and their families. From March, 2009 to the present, OP has received 778 Lifeline calls from veterans, returning soldiers, and their families and 439 calls to HelpLine.

In total, OP's crisis lines have been receiving an average of 3,000 calls per month, a 28% increase from 2008.

**Lifeline: 1-800-SUICIDE or 1-800-273-TALK
HelpLine: 1-800-923-HELP**

LifeLine also takes calls from Washington, Idaho, and Alaska – calls those states don't have the resources to respond to.

OP staff and 113 trained volunteers are on the crisis lines 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

OREGON PARTNERSHIP

Founded in 1993, Oregon Partnership is a 501-3c non-profit organization whose mission is to end substance abuse and suicide.

OP is the state's leading non-profit organization that promotes healthy communities through drug and alcohol awareness, prevention programs, and 24-hour crisis lines for treatment referral, crisis counseling, and suicide intervention.

YouthLine is a crisis line staffed by and for teens (1-877-553-TEEN).

To learn more, visit www.orpartnership.org