NEWS RELEASE
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MDHHS Announces Peer-run Warmline to Aid Persons with Mental Health Needs During COVID-19 Pandemic

Warmline will operate seven days a week 10 a.m. to 2 a.m.

LANSING, MICH. Starting today, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) is launching a statewide warmline for Michiganders living with persistent mental health conditions. The warmline will connect individuals with certified peer support specialists who have lived experiences of behavioral health issues, trauma or personal crises, and are trained to support and empower the callers.

The warmline will operate seven days a week from 10 a.m. to 2 a.m. at **888-PEER-753 (888-733-7753).** It is intended to serve individuals living with persistent mental health challenges including anxiety, depression and trauma. Individuals in crisis, including those considering suicide, are urged to contact the Disaster Distress Helpline 24/7 at 800-985-5990 or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 24/7 at 800-273-8255.

“The warmline will help individuals with long-term mental health challenges find someone to talk to – someone who has lived these challenges themselves – and do it while staying safe and staying home,” said Robert Gordon, MDHHS director. “COVID-19 is a grave threat not just to physical health, but also to mental health, and we are doing everything we can to offer supports for everyone.”

Warmlines are an alternative to traditional psychiatric crisis hotlines and are used to avoid extreme emotional distress that can lead to hospitalization or other severe outcomes that are preventable with early intervention of peer support. Warmlines alleviate the burden on crisis responders by offering a solution for non-crisis callers. The Certified Peer Support Specialist (CPSS) Warmline will offer support for individuals feeling isolated from society, and will provide referrals for outreach and assistance for those seeking critical physical and behavioral health services.

The warmline will provide particular support to underserved Medicaid beneficiaries, who often lack social connectedness and may now have increased anxiety and feelings of severe isolation during this critical time. It is available to all Michiganders, regardless of insurance status.

MDHHS is collaborating with Justice In Mental Health Organization (JIMHO) Project DOORS, Michigan's first peer-run organization. JIMHO will moderate the warmline and network with CPSS, statewide peer-run organizations, Community Mental Health Association of Michigan and MDHHS peer services unit. JIMHO has provided critical peer-support and community living skills to persons living with mental illness for 39 years and has assisted more than 15,000 residents using experienced peer-support specialists during that time.

Information around this outbreak is changing rapidly. The latest information is available at Michigan.gov/Coronavirus and CDC.gov/Coronavirus.

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