



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Timothy M. Kennedy

Senator Tim Kennedy Joins Crisis Services to Announce More Than \$500,000 in State Funding for Critical Mental Health Resources

TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY June 29, 2021

| ISSUE: **MENTAL HEALTH, ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES, SUICIDE PREVENTION; COVID-19; MENTAL HEALTH**



BUFFALO, N.Y. – Senator Tim Kennedy (D-**Buffalo**) joined Crisis Services’ Chief Executive Officer Jessica Pirro Tuesday to announce he has secured \$509,071 in this year’s state budget for mental health services across Western New York. This money will help to ensure that Crisis Services is able to continue to serve as the most comprehensive crisis center in Western New York. In 2020, Crisis Services responded to 78,093 calls into our Crisis and Addictions Hotline and 13,595 calls from the NYS Domestic and Sexual Violence Hotline and Erie County Domestic Violence Helpline.

The state funding comes at a critical time. The effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on mental health was intense in Buffalo and New York State. [According to a report from the NYS Health Foundation](#), more than

one-third of adult New Yorkers reported symptoms of anxiety and/or depression in May 2020. That number remained high five months later, with 37% of adult New Yorkers reporting poor mental health throughout the pandemic as of October 2020.

“As we begin to recover from the many effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, it’s imperative that we’re fully prepared to provide comprehensive care to those who may be struggling,” said **Senator Tim Kennedy**. “With this funding, we can rest easy knowing that those who need help will continue to have access to the top-quality support that Crisis Services is known for and delivers every day. The programs offered by Crisis Services are second-to-none, and I’ve been proud to work with them over the years to ensure they have the resources and the support they need from New York.”

“We are thrilled and encouraged by the tremendous support Senator Kennedy was able to garner in the State budget,” said **Jessica Pirro, CEO of Crisis Services**. “These dollars could not have come at a more critical time in our community and for our organization to support the life saving work provided 24 hours a day. We know that in a crisis, response time is critical. In 2020: 98% of individuals in urgent mental health crisis were responded to by our Mobile Outreach teams within 60 minutes of contact; 80% of crisis Hotline calls were answered within 30 seconds and; 82% of domestic & sexual violence survivors treated at local hospitals received intervention within 45 minutes. Timeliness matters in crisis situations and the costs to maintain and improve upon these response times only continues to grow. The support that Senator Kennedy has provided us will help to ensure our response can meet the pace of increased demand that we continue to experience across all of our departments at Crisis Services.”

In 2014, Kennedy joined Crisis Services’ to fight damaging cuts proposed by the New York State Office of Victim Services (OVS), repeatedly demanding that OVS reverse their decision, and organizing a petition drive that gathered more than 2,000 signatures. The following year, Kennedy announced he had secured \$300,000 for the agency.

Crisis Services is the most comprehensive crisis center in upstate New York, fulfilling community needs through its variety of crisis intervention programs, ongoing support, prevention programming, and community collaboration. They operate a variety of 24 hour crisis Hotlines, including serving as the local hub of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline as well as an Addiction Hotline. They provide Emergency Mental Health Mobile Services and the Advocate Program for survivors of rape, domestic violence, family violence, and elder abuse. The 24-hour hotline provides suicide prevention services and offers help to anyone experiencing a person, emotional, or mental health crisis.

If you or someone you know is in crisis, there is always help. The Crisis Services 24-hour hotline is available at (716) 834-3131.