

Did you recently lose funding from the Federal Government?

No. The grant that we operated under for three years began October 1st 2001 and ran through December 31st 2004. From May 1998 to October 2001 and from January 2005 until now we have survived on donations, the Take Action Tour proceeds and the support of organizations like the National Mental Health Association.

How did you expect to keep running the Hopeline after your grant with SAMHSA ran out?

At the outset of the grant in 2001 we were explicitly told that we had to be self-sufficient by the end of the grant as there would be no more money after 2004. We took them seriously and worked hard those three years to develop other funding streams. It should be noted that the prime on the grant AAS did nothing to help us become self sufficient and actually hampered our efforts considerably. In addition the SAMHSA which had many stakeholders and grantees who would clearly have a stake in what the Hopeline was doing and might have supported our becoming self sufficient were not only not ever connected with us we were specifically not invited to the annual grantee meeting that SAMHSA holds to bring grantees together to see how partnerships and collaborations could be developed. A perfect example of this is the Social Health Marketing firm that SAMHSA contracts with to the tune of over 30 million per year would go to 50+ conferences per year to display SAMHSA material. Each time I encountered them and showed them our journal, Preventing Suicide the National Journal www.hopeline.com/journal the exhibitor would always remark that they wish they had our journal to hand out as most people ask if they have something suicide related. We just chalked this up to government incompetence and one hand not knowing what the other was doing.

Who Started 1-800-SUICIDE?

On August 16th 1998 the Kristin Brooks Hope Center founded the National Hopeline Network 1-800-SUICIDE. Over 1,000 people from across the USA call 1-800-SUICIDE every day. It's a toll-free confidential hotline that connects the person in crisis to one of the 200+ crisis centers closest to the caller so that emergency services will be provided if necessary. This network of existing crisis service providers have joined together as the National Hopeline Network under the leadership of the Kristin Brooks Hope Center. KBHC created and continues to manage this network so that any person, regardless of his or her background, will be connected to a Certified Crisis Center worker for help. Often, the crisis worker who picks up the phone becomes the non-judgmental listening ear and support that many of us can't find in our friends and families.

How did the government get involved?

The Federal Government got involved through the efforts of the late Senator Paul Wellstone after hearing the plea of 1-800-SUICIDE's founder H. Reese Butler II to Congress to help support the National Hopeline Network. Butler had called for the increase in funding to provide enhanced and expanded crisis center certification, training of crisis line workers, and support for the actual network and the organization that runs it. On June 28th, 2000 Congress appropriated (added to the federal budget) \$3 million dollars to the SAMHSA annual budget to support and evaluate a national hotline network of suicide crisis lines and to train and certify crisis line workers.

What was the money supposed to be used for?

Clearly the intent of Congress and the late Senator Wellstone was to “support and evaluate a national hotline network of suicide crisis lines and to train and certify crisis line workers” since that was the language in the amendment.

What was SAMHSA supposed to do?

To write a Request for Proposals (RFP) and solicit applicants for a three year grant to support and evaluate a national hotline network of suicide crisis lines and to train and certify crisis line workers. As Hopeline was the only national hotline network of suicide crisis hotlines it was the only applicant in partnership with the American Association of Suicidology which certified crisis line workers. Next upon awarding the grant their role was to support and provide grant management oversight to the grantees.

Why has Hopeline not received the money related to the grant?

The Prime Contractor, American Association of Suicidology (AAS), rejected over \$266,000 in legitimate grant related expenses from Feb.2003-Dec.2004. In Jan. 2005 Hopeline filed a claim against AAS. AAS has since given permission to Hopeline to seek these funds directly from the Federal Government.

Where is the claim today?

In August of 2005 Hopeline filed its claim directly with the SAMHSA. Typically federal agencies respond within 90 days by either rejecting, accepting in part or in whole claims filed against them. It has been 11 months and still no response from the SAMHSA. That is why we are asking the public for support to ask the agency to move the claim along fairly.

What is SAMHSA doing today?

We are not sure but they have had the claim for the 266k since they ended our funding in 2004. SAMHSA has since started their own suicide hotline network which they own and have access to all the data from.

How much money does Hopeline need?

Hopeline’s annual budget is about \$500,000 - Hopeline desperately needs to raise the 266k owed to it by SAMHSA to pay phone bills that we are already in debt for.

Is it being run efficiently?

KBHC is one of the most effective and efficient NGO in the mental health field. 95%+ of all dollars received by the Hopeline go to direct service programs. KBHC undergoes our annual audits including A-133 audits starting in 2000. Our CFO is pro bono and our books are open to the public as we are a public benefit corporation. Hopeline parent organization the Kristin Brooks Hope Center was named charity of the month by www.charity.com

Has Hopeline tried to speak directly to SAMHSA?

Hopeline has made many attempts to open communications with the SAMHSA. All appeals through third parties, direct letters, emails and even hiring a law firm have but have been unable to move our outstanding bills through their process. They only response we get is simply "Donate 1-800-SUICIDE to the Federal Government".

What is the goal of this campaign?

To raise the money needed to keep 1-800-SUICIDE private and confidential. To bring pressure onto the SAMHSA to process our overdue bills of \$266,000, to have the federal government cease ownership of crisis hotline data to insure complete privacy and confidentiality and allow future private NGOs to provide these very important and confidential services without being suffocated by the government.

Questions?

Please email us at info@hopeline.com