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# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Suicide Prevention and Crisis Intervention Offered By 2-1-1 Big Bend**

**TALLAHASSEE** – Many people are familiar with the community information and referral services offered by hotline counselors at 2-1-1 Big Bend. Helpline 2-1-1 assists nearly 2,000 people each month with assessment and referral plus information about local resources that can be helpful for many difficult situations. But, many of these callers also receive immediate counseling support and crisis intervention services.

In 2010 (the latest year for which we have national statistics), there were 38,364 suicides in the U.S. including 2,789 in Florida. Suicide is the tenth leading cause of death in the U.S. and the third leading cause of death among young (15-24) Americans. During the past year, there have been several deaths by suicide in Leon County and North Florida.

2-1-1 Big Bend is a member of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline Network (1-800-273-TALK) and answers calls to that number if they come from North Florida. Its trained counselors offer suicide intervention and prevention services on both the 2-1-1 and Lifeline numbers on a 24-hour-a-day, every day basis. In 2012 more than 1200 calls related to suicide were answered and fifteen percent of them were assessed as “high risk”.

When someone becomes depressed, feels hopeless and is contemplating suicide, it’s important to know how to reach someone who can help them immediately. Suicide can be prevented. “Our hotline counselors are well-trained and experienced helpers, stated Randy Nicklaus, President of 2-1-1 Big Bend. They want to make a difference and help people get through life crises that could affect any one of us. We want everyone to know that Helpline 2-1-1 is here to help at any time.”

As part of its mission, 2-1-1 Big Bend provides suicide intervention and prevention education and training. A two-day Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) is offered to the community at least twice a year. Agency counselors receive additional training in active listening and crisis intervention. Hotline calls are confidential and callers may remain anonymous.

If you are concerned about a friend or family member, or want to talk about your own situation, 2-1-1 is the number to call for help. 2-1-1 Big Bend answers more than 50,000 calls each year through its four hotline programs. Anyone can dial 2-1-1 in the eight-county Big Bend area to talk with someone when it may be difficult to talk to friends or family.

For more information about 2-1-1 Big Bend or to access its searchable Big Bend resource directory, visit [www.211BigBend.org](http://www.211BigBend.org). A free iPhone app is also available to download. Because Life is 24/7, so are we. 2-1-1 Big Bend is a United Way agency.

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