



Sen. Tharp: Mental Health Services Are Vital To Community Wellness, He Highlights 9-8-8 Importance

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New 9-8-8 helpline launches Saturday, July 16

MARYVILLE – The National Suicide Prevention Hotline’s 9-8-8 dial code is set to activate on Saturday, July 16, and State Senator Kris Tharp is highlighting its importance to community wellness in the Metro East.



“In my experience as a law enforcement officer and jail administrator in Madison County, I can attest to the importance of offering services and support to individuals struggling with their mental health,” said Tharp (D-Bethalto). “I encourage residents to spread the word on this new 9-8-8 helpline, it could save a life.”

For support, individuals in need can dial 9-8-8 on a phone to be connected with a trained mental health professional who can provide direct assistance during an emotional crisis.

In Illinois’ Fiscal Year 2023 budget, implemented as of July 1 of this year, mental health care and community-based substance use disorder treatment providers were appropriated an increase of \$230 million for support services.

Sen. Tharp has partnered with mental health service providers in the Metro East to identify accessibility concerns and connect residents with available assistance.

“Untreated mental illness can cause severe behavioral or physical health problems,” Tharp said. “To help ensure our families are healthy and our communities are well, we must make a collaborative effort to connect our neighbors in need with assistance. The 9-8-8 helpline will improve accessibility to services.”

If you or someone you know is struggling with mental health, resources are available at www.988lifeline.org.