

New 988 hotline is the 911 for mental health emergencies

By LINDSEY TANNER
Associated Press

Quick help for suicidal thoughts and other mental health emergencies is now as easy as 9-8-8.

The United States' first nationwide three-digit mental health crisis hotline went live on Saturday. It's designed to be as easy

to remember and use as 911, but instead of a dispatcher sending police, firefighters or paramedics, 988 will connect callers with trained mental health counselors.

The federal government has provided over \$280 million to help states create systems that will do much more, including mobile mental health crisis teams that can be sent to people's

homes and emergency mental health centers, similar to urgent care clinics that treat physical aches and pains.

"This is one of the most exciting things that has happened" in mental health care, said Brian Hepburn, a psychiatrist who heads the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors.

Nhan: 'So grateful for this community'

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Along with practicing in an urban environment, she participates in a program where residents spend a month in a more rural area — and she chose Seaside.

Nhan entered the medical field during the time of the pandemic. At the end of her fourth year in medical school, COVID changed the profession.

"It was definitely really scary being a brand new doctor jumping into the medical field, which is in itself, kind of terrifying," she said. "But then adding on a pandemic where we had no idea what was going to happen put a tailspin on things."

The scariest thing for families during COVID can be the isolation from loved ones.

"It is really painful," she said. "The only people that they see are their care providers. Sometimes you can set up an iPad or some-

thing that you can talk to your loved ones, but they're intubated, they can't talk back. It's a whole different ballgame. It breaks my heart to see when people are in the ICU, not doing well, their families calling us to see if they're able to visit — and us having to say 'no,' unfortunately."

With limited resources, doctors and hospitals face the kinds of ethical deliberations "that maybe weren't too much in the forefront in the past."

Much of the pandemic measures, such as increased levels of personal protective equipment for staff, are likely to remain. "I think that with the pandemic kind of slowing down a little bit, we're relaxing a little bit some of those guidelines," she said. "But we're always thinking about where the trajectory of the pandemic is and adjusting as needed."

During the second year of residency, the program sends one resident physician to Seaside to explore

what medical practice is like in a rural community. Nhan alternates four weeks in Seaside and four weeks in Portland. "I wasn't aware of this opportunity until I interviewed for the job position and found out that I would get the opportunity to be back in my hometown," she said.

Among her patients are former classmates, their parents and children. "That's just kind of the name of the game in the small town," she said.

A typical day is caring for patients in the primary care clinic, the emergency room, or admitted to the hospital.

"I'm so grateful to this community for welcoming my family and I into the community with open arms and continuing to support us through all these years," Nhan said. "Although I was born in Vietnam, Seaside will always be my home and I hope to be able to give back to this community in the future."

Dog: Petition gathers more than 25,000 signatures

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Soon after Layla was seized, Eric Halverson, the interim police chief at the time, designated Layla as a level five dangerous dog.

Mayer, while expressing remorse for the death of the cat, had objections to the wording of the city code and filed an appeal in Municipal Court.

"It needs to be reworded ... So if a cat kills a squirrel, is that what we're talking about? Because cats kill birds all the time. Is any judge in their right mind going to euthanize a cat for that? It's the same situation here," he said. "That's where it's up to the judge, in my opinion, to inject some logic and humanity."

Kris Kaino, a Municipal Court judge, supported the level five designation and ordered that Layla be euthanized.

Mayer challenged claims made

in Municipal Court that because Layla had shown aggression toward a cat, she would soon be aggressive to humans.

"Around people, (Layla is) fantastic. She's a very sweet dog, no signs of aggression whatsoever toward people," Julia Johnson, a staff member at the Clatsop County Animal Shelter, said.

Johnson added that Layla has a "very high prey drive" and will go after other animals.

Kaino put a hold on his euthanasia order as Mayer appealed to Circuit Court. Mayer hired Geordie Duckler, an attorney in Tigard who specializes in animal-related legal issues, to assist with the case.

City Attorney Blair Henningsgaard filed a motion to dismiss Mayer's appeal. Judge Cindee Matyas denied the city's motion last week.

Mayer, who has owned several

pit bulls, feels like a bias against Layla's breed has played a role.

"Every form from the court and every form from the city attorney, it emphasizes a 'pit bull dog,'" he said. "Do you think they would do that (for) a 'black Lab dog' or a 'German shepherd dog?' It would just say a dog. They're trying to point out, specifically, I think, that Layla is a pit bull."

Earlier this month, Mayer started an online petition to rally support for Layla. As of Sunday, it has reached over 25,000 signatures.

"It's gone kind of bonkers," Mayer said. "... It feels good to know that there are folks that really understand how difficult of a situation this is.

"They are as sad as I am that a cat had to lose its life, but they don't feel that a dog should have to lose its life as well."

Warrenton: Roundtable discussion July 26

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The city will likely look to an in-house interim option between her departure and the next city manager's hiring, Engbretson said.

The pursuit of a new city manager has been a challenge for the city, with the search stretching out

over the past few months.

In April, the city named Ben Burgener, who held the same role in Stanfield, as its next city manager, but contract negotiations failed shortly after. Burgener was the only finalist for the position, so the city tasked Jensen Strategies — the Portland consulting firm hired

to find and vet applicants — with conducting another search.

Panel and City Commission interviews will take place in the coming weeks. The community will be able to meet the finalists at a roundtable discussion from 6 to 7:30 p.m. on July 26 at the Warrenton Community Center.

Library: 'The remodeled library would be much more accessible'

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When Arline LaMear, a former librarian, was elected mayor in 2014, she made a new library a priority. But over the years, plans have been scaled back or scrapped because of cost.

An idea to expand the library into the formerly vacant Waldorf Hotel was abandoned after preservationists fought the move. The hotel has since been converted into the Merwyn Apartments.

The city also looked at building a new library at Heritage Square as part of a mixed-use residential and commercial development, but in 2016 the City Council decided not to move forward because of cost.

In 2017, a renovation of the existing building received the green light from city councilors contingent on the library foundation's ability to raise \$3.5 million toward the \$5 million cost.

The city hired Hennebery Eddy Architects to assess the condition of the library and develop a range of conceptual designs. The foundation's fundraising efforts were not successful and renovation efforts stalled.

In January, the City Council unanimously agreed to finally make a decision on the library. Either the council would pursue a bond measure for the renovation if there was public support, or the city would move forward with a project using the existing funds available.

After reviewing polling that indicated a majority of voters would vote in favor of a bond measure, the City Council in June unanimously supported placing a bond measure on the November ballot.

The city has \$2.1 million on hand from carbon credits, coronavirus relief funds and former Mayor W.C. Logan's memorial fund. A \$500,000 grant will come from the National Endowment for the Arts if the bond measure is approved.

The tax rate is estimated at 57 cents per \$1,000 of assessed property value.

"For me, I'm really excited that we're here now," Mayor Bruce Jones said during the work session. "I remember six years ago — it was exactly six years ago in July of 2016 — that there was a proposal before City Council for building a new library on Heritage Square.

"The project has really languished in the six years since then," he said. "I'm very happy that our City Council had said it was time to make a decision and to bring it to the voters and let the voters — who told us overwhelmingly 10 years ago all things they wanted in a renovated library ... tell us if they want to pay for those things."

Functionality

Jones said the bond measure is an opportunity to, at the very least, address decades of deferred maintenance and increase the functionality of the space.

David Wark, of Hennebery Eddy Architects, noted the deferred maintenance when describing the issues associated with the building. He said there is also limited accessibility and antiquated mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems.

Wark said the usable space of the library is about 9,000 square feet. The conceptual design for the renovation would utilize the full 18,000-square-foot footprint and make the entire building compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

He said the design would maintain the 1960s character of the building while adding more windows and natural light.

The first floor could include a space for reading, study and collections. Space for work areas and group study could be added, along with a teen room and expanded children's area. The mezzanine would be removed.

A staircase and elevator would lead to a remodeled basement, which would include an enlarged Veterans Memorial Flag Room for community gatherings, a media lab, collaboration rooms and the Astoriana Room for historical and retrospective collections.

The concept would reduce the number of books on display and instead make the materials searchable by a library catalog and retrievable for use and checkout.

But Wark noted the concept and details will be refined through the public process.

Jones said building out the basement and doubling the size of the usable space is one of the strongest selling points of the project.

He said he did not want to see a reduction in browsable stacks, though, noting that it has been a concern raised by the public. Library leaders have also said they are not planning to go that route.

"One of the pleasures of going to the library is walking through the stacks," the mayor said. "It's just looking at titles and finding something you had no idea you were interested in and checking that book out and taking it home."

City Councilor Joan Herman said many people, including herself, cannot browse the stacks on the mezzanine now if they are in a wheelchair, have trouble balancing or are pushing a large baby stroller. She said the downstairs stacks are also too narrow for a wheelchair.

"The remodeled library would be much more accessible," she said.

'I JUST WANT TO ASSURE THE PUBLIC THAT AS WE GO THROUGH SCHEMATIC DESIGN, THAT THERE'S GOING TO BE TREMENDOUS OPPORTUNITY FOR INPUT.'

Paul Benoit | Astoria's interim city manager



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