***Where do Suicide Hotlines fit into a System of Care for Suicidal Individuals?***

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In 2001, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) established the country’s first program with the mission of reaching and serving all persons at risk of suicide in the U.S. through a network of certified crisis call centers. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (NSPL) network has emerged as a key component of a range of suicide prevention programs and is currently providing back-up resources for a myriad of suicide prevention programs, including: public awareness messaging campaigns, school-based suicide prevention programs, and federal, community and advocacy information/referral documents and internet sites. The 2010 National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention prominently references the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (NSPL) and telephone crisis services as an integral part of the national strategy. Given its role as a national “safety net,” our research evaluating whether the NSPL is meeting its goals to prevent at-risk individuals from engaging in suicidal behavior, and to enhance the continuity of care for suicidal individuals continues to be of the utmost clinical and public health relevance. The current presentation will focus on our evaluation studies and describe how the NSPL and telephone crisis services fit within a system of care for suicidal individuals by providing effective quality services to individuals in suicidal crises; enhancing continuity of care for suicidal patients discharged from emergency departments and inpatient facilities; and expanding access to care for individuals in suicidal crises.