



MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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[Houghton, Mi] Behavioral Health services in our community are critically necessary and as continued social and economic factors challenge our citizens, these services are even more important. However; as funding levels and funding sources are reduced, costs of operations continue to rise, and the number of people that need help increases, the agencies providing services are being challenged financially and programmatically to maintain the scope and quality of services on which we have come to depend.

Dial Help, Inc. the oldest and only crisis intervention service in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan is not immune to these challenges. "Crisis events involving suicide, attempted suicide and suicidal ideation rates have gone from 3% to nearly 10% in the past five years." Said Rebecca Crane, executive director for Dial Help. "Crisis calls, prevention services, sexual assault...we are seeing increases in all areas – except in the area of funding that is needed to provide the services."

Dial Help doesn't just want to maintain services they currently offer, they intend to enhance and expand services and are looking at new ways to fund the programs that are so important for our community. "Many people have come to rely on the crisis intervention services much like they would any other emergency response department." Said Vicki Mikkola, Director of Copper Country Mental Health. The numbers support Mikkola's statement and last year alone Dial Help responded to nearly 3,200 personal crisis incidents in the four-county region; 225 of those incidents were involving suicide and/or suicidal ideations.

In response to the Portage Health Foundation's solicitation of request for proposals this past fall, Crane, along with 40 other organizations submitted applications for funding. The Portage Health Foundation Board of Directors recognizes the significant role Dial Help plays in our community and is pleased to announce that they have **awarded \$50,000.00** to support the efforts of Crane and her team of crisis intervention professionals.

"This was a vote of confidence in Rebecca and her team." Said Kevin Store, Executive Director of the Portage Health Foundation. "We know how financially challenging it is right now for many of the non-profits in our community. We hope this award will help to raise the community's awareness to the vitally important role Dial Help plays and the amazing work that these folks do each and every day. They support our community and the community needs to support them."

The Portage Health Foundation's award of \$50,000.00 will provide some financial assistance that Dial Help needs to maintain its accredited crisis intervention services. "The support of the Portage Health Foundation is just unreal." said Crane. "It will relieve some financial burden and allow us to focus more of our resources on helping the people in our community."

The Portage Health Foundation is a 501(c)3 charitable organization that receives and contributes charitable donations which support the health needs of the community through enhanced philanthropy and community collaboration throughout Baraga, Houghton, Keweenaw and Ontonagon counties.