

Response to Questions on the FY 2009 Advertised Budget Plan

Request By: Chairman Connolly

Question: Summarize the rationale for the elimination of funding for CrisisLink in order to balance the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board's (CSB) FY 2009 budget.

Response: The CSB has proposed to eliminate the Crisis Intervention Service Contract with CrisisLink in the amount of \$135,000 in order to balance the CSB's FY 2009 budget. The CSB funded the CrisisLink contract that support crisis prevention and phone-based early intervention services beginning in FY 2005 using fund balance that was made available as part of the *FY 2004 Carryover Review*. The CSB received a commensurate increase in the CSB's General Fund Transfer in FY 2006 to continue funding the CrisisLink contract while a regional commission explored and developed the Northern Virginia 211 Information and Referral System. In February 2008, CrisisLink was awarded a state contract and funding through the Council of Community Services to answer 211 calls in the Northern Virginia Area.

CrisisLink is accessed by one local number (703-257-4077), two toll-free numbers (1-800-273-TALK and 1-800-SUICIDE) and the regional information and referral hotline (2-1-1), and handles an estimated 578 calls each month from Fairfax County residents. The majority of the calls answered by CrisisLink are information and referral related. On average, CrisisLink handles 8-9 suicide related intervention calls per month.

According to the CSB, since the new 211 system is now established, the proposed elimination of funding to support the CSB's contract with CrisisLink for crisis intervention services is to avoid duplication of funding for the same service and to reallocate limited CSB funding to more critical programs. The service coverage of the new 211 state-funded system with CrisisLink matches the one under the CSB's contract with the only critical gap being that the state contract does not provide direct service for suicide intervention calls. However, the national 24 hour suicide hotline number (1-800-273-TALK) and the County's Mobile Crisis Unit and Emergency Services at Woodburn Center (703-573-5679) will continue to be available 24/7 to directly handle suicide intervention calls occurring in the County that are identified by CrisisLink.