

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services Launches Suicide Prevention Center's**

**"CrisisText" For Individuals Who are Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing**

CULVER CITY, CA – Many people think about suicide at some point in their lives. When people feel totally alone and hopeless about their future, their lives might become unbearable. Feeling isolated and desperate can be particularly precarious for those who are deaf or hard of hearing.

To help those in crisis who have these special challenges, Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services' "CrisisText" service has officially launched. The service is available 24/7 and is intended to increase access to support for those who are deaf or hard-of-hearing, are in crisis and might be thinking about suicide.

The Suicide Prevention Center's "CrisisText" is a confidential and secure service that provides live help with a trained counselor to prevent suicide through text messages.

The service is funded by the Mental Health Services Act through the Orange County Health Care Agency's Prevention and Intervention Division, Mental Health Services Act/Prop 63.

"Crisis Text's" step-by-step instructions are simple to follow. Users text the word "HEARME" to the number 839863. They will receive a message confirming that they have successfully reached the Suicide Prevention Center. Once they have connected with the center, the rest of the conversation is conducted in a texting format.

Deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals in crisis can also call the crisis telephone line at 877-727-4747. The line is available 24/7 and can assist callers or their loved ones in English or Spanish via operator assisted relay services.

Lyn Morris, Vice-President of Clinical Operations at Didi Hirsch, comments, "There is hope and help. We are here for those in crisis. 'CrisisText' is a simple, completely confidential way that those who are deaf or hard-of hearing can access our services quickly, without waiting for the help of an interpreter, or for those uncomfortable communicating how they are feeling through an interpreter."

Founded in 1958, the Suicide Prevention Center (SPC) provides critical services to people who are contemplating suicide and those affected by the suicide of loved ones. SPC was the first in the U.S. to establish a 24-hour suicide prevention crisis line and has since been the model for crisis lines around the country—and the world.

Didi Hirsch's Suicide Prevention Center crisis line is one of the nation's busiest, responding to more than 52,000 calls a year. English- and Spanish-speaking counselors are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

With 70 years of experience, Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services transforms lives by providing quality mental health care and substance abuse services in communities where stigma or poverty limit access. From 11 locations and 65 schools throughout Los Angeles and Orange Counties, Didi Hirsch helps more than 90,000 children and adults each year, offering services that range from community education to outpatient care to residential treatment. Its Suicide Prevention Center was the first in the nation. Learn more at <http://www.didihirsch.org/>.

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