



Ottawa, Canada
K1A 0N2

Mayor Lyn Hall
1110 Patricia Blvd.
Prince George, BC
V2L 3V9

Reference: 848989

April 20, 2021

Dear Mayor Lyn Hall:

We acknowledge receipt of your March 30, 2021 correspondence addressed to the Honourable Patty Hajdu, P.C. M.P., received at the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) on April 9, 2021, supporting a national suicide prevention three-digit (9-8-8) hotline in Canada.

We would like to take this opportunity to confirm that the CRTC is aware of the public interest in this very important matter and that we share the concerns you raised.

On March 9, 2021, we published on our web site, a letter addressed to The Honourable François-Philippe Champagne, Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development and The Honourable Patty Hajdu, Minister of Health. We stated that the CRTC has included the consideration of a three-digit number for suicide crisis support as part of its [departmental plan](#), and continues to monitor this issue closely.

[Telecom - Commission letter addressed to François-Philippe Champagne \(ISED\) and Patty Hajdu \(Minister of Health\)](#)

Your thoughts and insights are important, and we appreciate you taking the time to share your comments.

Sincerely,

Paolo Maiorino
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Telecom - Commission letter addressed to François-Philippe Champagne (ISED) and Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health)

Ottawa, 9 March 2021

By Email

The Honourable François-Philippe Champagne
Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development
235 Queen Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0H5

The Honourable Patty Hajdu
Minister of Health
Tunney's Pasture
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0K9

Dear Ministers,

Thank you for your recent correspondence of January 27, 2021, with respect to assigning a three-digit number for suicide crisis support. I share the concerns you raised, and would like to take this opportunity to confirm that the CRTC is aware of the public interest in this very important matter.

While it has yet to make a formal announcement on a future proceeding to consider the matter, the CRTC has included the consideration of a three-digit number for suicide crisis support as part of its [departmental plan](#), and continues to monitor this issue closely. Our current activities include conducting research and outreach sessions with organizations involved in suicide prevention, keeping abreast of trends, and monitoring the developments in the United States, which also shares the North American Numbering Plan.

Based on its general practice, should the Commission choose to pursue this matter, it would initiate a public proceeding in order to build a fulsome public record in an open and transparent manner, on the basis of which it could determine any obstacles and how they could be overcome. Issues that we expect to explore as part of any proceeding include the ability to use 988 or another three-digit number throughout Canada, the technical functionality required to appropriately meet the needs of suicide prevention services, and how to connect callers to these services. For example, there are currently areas in Canada that do not have 10-digit local dialing, where technical limitations would prevent a number such as 988 from functioning as a three-digit dialing code. Our intent would be to consult Canadians on how to best address such challenges.

As your letter acknowledges, the jurisdiction of the CRTC in this matter is limited to requiring that telecommunications service providers implement a three-digit numbering resource across Canada. With the introduction of an easily recognized and remembered three-digit number, one of the expected outcomes would be an increase in call volume to crisis centres. The successful implementation of this initiative would require leadership by, and collaboration amongst, various organisations, including your Departments, provincial and territorial governments, public health organizations and the existing networks that currently provide and support mental health crisis and suicide prevention services.

Thank you for taking the time to write to me about this important matter.

Sincerely,

Ian Scott
Chairman and CEO

Date modified:

2021-03-09