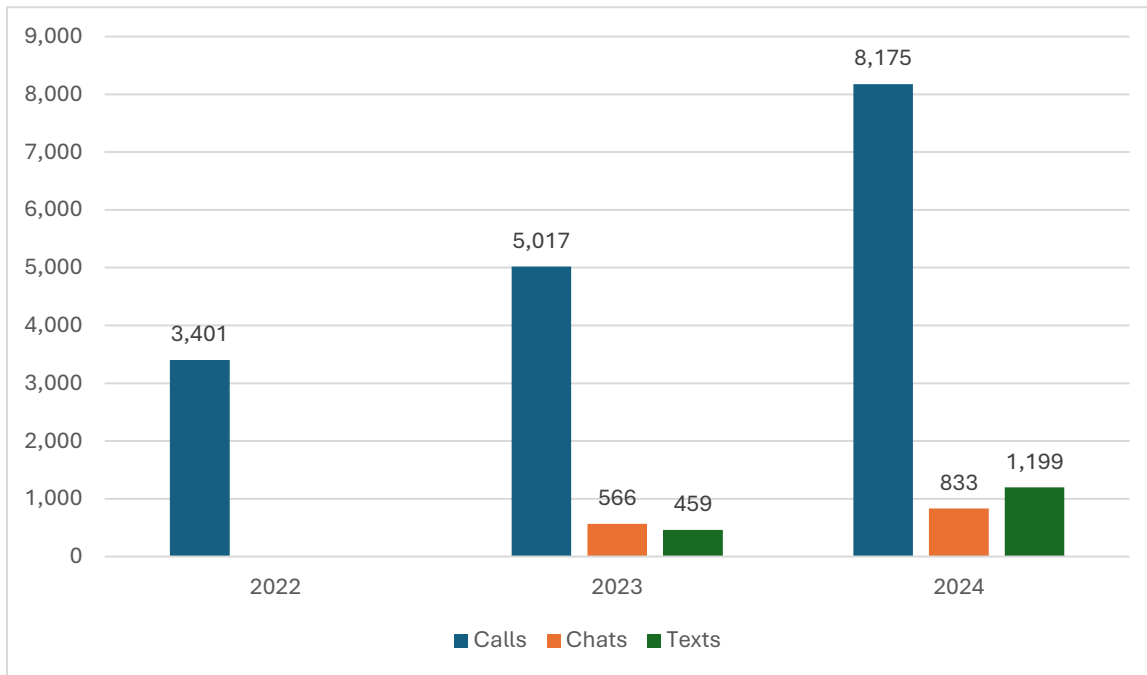


**Chairman Nelson and Members of the House Appropriation Committee – Human Resource Division,**

*I urge your support for HB 1012 to ensure continued and increased funding for the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline and the 211 Information and Referral Helpline.*

These services provide free, confidential, and lifesaving support to North Dakotans, with FirstLink reporting rising call, chat, and text volumes reflecting a growing need. Suicide is a leading cause of death in our state, with more than 130 lives lost in 2021—above the national average.

In 2024, FirstLink handled over 10,000 interactions from help-seekers in North Dakota reaching the 988 Lifeline. This is a nearly 70% increase from the number of 988 interactions handled in 2023, representing the growing need for crisis intervention and emotional support services in our state.



Sustained funding is essential to address urgent mental health crises, particularly in rural areas, and to ensure no one in need feels alone. Thank you for supporting this vital initiative.

Sincerely,

Jeremy Brown  
Advocate for Suicide Prevention  
Director of Data Quality, FirstLink