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**NATIONAL HOTLINE AND DR. PHIL FORM STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP TO  
PREVENT SUICIDE DURING ECONOMIC CRISIS**

**Dr. Phil Avatar on Lifeline Gallery ([www.lifelinegallery.org](http://www.lifelinegallery.org))**

**Urges People in Crisis to Call**

**1-800-273-TALK (8255)**

**New York, NY (March 31, 2009)** –The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, a 24-hour crisis hotline, and Dr. Phil announce today the formation of a strategic partnership to prevent suicide during the economic crisis. The partnership will utilize traditional and new media to offer help to people who are in suicidal crisis or emotional distress. Partnership efforts include the Dr. Phil avatar launched today on Lifeline Gallery ([www.lifelinegallery.org](http://www.lifelinegallery.org)), an online forum filled with hundreds of stories from suicide survivors and suicide prevention advocates.

Studies have shown a clear link between the rise in unemployment and suicide rates. In the United States, unemployment is at its highest in 16 years. Suicide is a public health crisis that claims 32,000 lives a year in the United States, twice that of homicide. "We are extremely grateful that Dr. Phil has joined the fight to prevent suicide during the economic crisis," said Giselle Stolper, CEO of Link2Health Solutions, the organization that administers Lifeline. "We encourage everyone to step forward and do what they can. If Dr. Phil saves just one life, we will have succeeded."

In addition to the avatar, Dr. Phil helps prevent suicide by offering 1-800-273-TALK on his shows about suicidal behaviors for viewers who may be in need. "When we did the show 'The Bridge' Controversy, we were gratified to learn that after viewing that program, people who needed to talk to someone called the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. It is my hope that anyone in distress will consider this Web site (Lifeline Gallery) a resource and know there is someone out there who will listen," said Dr. Phil.

During this time of economic crisis and in light of recent suicides executed while online, Dr. Phil and Lifeline recognized a need for a message of help and hope to reach people by using the internet's capacity to reach millions. On the Lifeline Gallery, people can view the Dr. Phil avatar, email it to friends, and access an embedded code that allows the avatar to be placed on social networking profiles and other Web sites.

Dr. Phil's support comes at a time when Lifeline's workload is increasing. From 2007 to 2008, Lifeline has seen a 36% increase in call volume. Lifeline's federal funder, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), is grateful for Dr. Phil's willingness to help prevent suicide. "We are thankful that Dr. Phil has lent his support to the suicide prevention community and to people in crisis by becoming a part of the Lifeline Gallery," said SAMHSA Acting Administrator Eric Broderick, D.D.S., M.P.H. "SAMHSA is honored to be part of this ongoing national effort to provide hope and help to everyone at risk."

### **About the Lifeline**

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-TALK (8255) is a nationwide network of 137 local crisis centers. Lifeline is federally funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and administered by **Link2Health Solutions**, a wholly owned subsidiary of the **Mental Health Association of New York City (MHA of NYC)**. Launched in January 2005, Lifeline provides free and confidential crisis counseling to anyone in need 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by calling 1-800-273-TALK.

### **About The DR. PHIL Show**

The syndicated series, DR. PHIL, was created by Harpo Productions, produced by Peteski Productions in association with CBS Television Distribution. It is broadcast on over 214 stations representing 100% of the country. Since its debut in September 2002, the series has been ranked second among all daytime talk shows and consistently ranks among the Top Ten of all syndicated strips (Source: NSS Ranking Report).

Executive Producer Carla Pennington has been with DR. PHIL since its first season, as have Supervising Producers Angie Kraus Bell, Kandi Amelon-Sawyer, Kathy Giaconia, Lisa Steinke and Director Paul Casey.

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