



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**February 10, 2014**

**Contact: Shannon McQuat, Marketing Coordinator  
Transitions-Mental Health Association  
805.550.7692, Shannon@t-mha.org**

### **SLO HOTLINE AWARDED CRISIS CENTER ACCREDITATION**

San Luis Obispo, CA – SLO Hotline has been awarded a 3-year Crisis Center Accreditation through the American Association of Suicidology (AAS).

SLO Hotline 800-783-0607 is San Luis Obispo County's confidential mental health, emotional support and suicide prevention phone line. It is available free of charge, 24 hours every day. SLO Hotline is a program of Transitions-Mental Health Association (TMHA), a community-based nonprofit.

The AAS, founded in 1968 by Edwin S. Shneidman, Ph.D., promotes research, public awareness programs, public education and training for professionals and volunteers. In addition, AAS serves as a national clearinghouse for information on suicide.

In 1976, the AAS developed a set of standards and criteria for certification of crisis centers throughout the United States. Today the AAS has over 80 centers meeting stringent standards of service and training.

Besides the humanistic value of assuring minimum standards of service for persons in crisis, AAS accreditation validates service delivery programs that are performing according to nationally recognized standards and provides access to criteria for systematic, ongoing self-evaluation. In addition, accredited crisis centers have increased credibility with funding agencies and insurance companies.

People in life-threatening and other crises who obtain service from AAS-accredited programs are assured that staff has seriously examined their commitment to provide service according to recognized standards.

“We are thrilled to be recognized by AAS as a crisis center that meets a very high standard in the suicide prevention and crisis intervention services we provide through SLO Hotline,” said Barry Johnson, TMHA’s Director of Rehabilitation and Advocacy Services in San Luis Obispo. “Our on-going connection with this prestigious accreditation body will certainly make for better services and a higher degree of effectiveness.”

SLO Hotline is a valuable resource in the community, supporting the work of local government and mental health service agencies and relieving call volume for the local 911 service. Additionally, SLO Hotline will refer callers with other needs to 211, the resource phone number available for all other community information and referral needs, a program of United Way.

“Confidential telephone services are always available for anyone in suicidal crisis or emotional distress through this program,” said Mike Bossenberry, Program Coordinator for SLO Hotline. “SLO Hotline is also available to answer non-emergency calls from anyone in need of emotional or mental health information or referrals.”

Bossenberry also passed a rigorous examination of his knowledge and application of crisis theory to his work with clients to receive an individual crisis worker certification through AAS.

### **ABOUT TMHA**

Transitions-Mental Health Association is a nonprofit organization dedicated to eliminating stigma and promoting recovery and wellness for people with mental illness through work, housing, community and family support services. TMHA operates 30 programs at over 35 locations that reach over 2,000 people and 1,500 families in San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara counties. The emphasis of TMHA's many services is to teach vital independent living skills, and build a framework for community re-entry through personal empowerment and hands on experience. For over 30 years, TMHA has been dedicated to providing housing, employment, case management and life-skills support to teens and adults with mental illness; and support, resources and education for their loved ones. For more information, visit [www.T-MHA.org](http://www.T-MHA.org).

### **ABOUT SLO HOTLINE**

SLO Hotline’s Vision...To build and maintain a healthy, vital community by providing suicide prevention, stigma reduction and mental health support services. SLO Hotline’s Mission...Assisting our friends and neighbors by preventing suicide and encouraging mental health recovery in our community. Our Purpose...To provide emotional support and mental health crisis intervention for the people of San Luis Obispo County in a caring and cost effective way.

### **ABOUT AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF SUICIDOLOGY (AAS)**

With suicide a constant reality with no boundaries in our society, it touches the old and young, rich and poor. Regardless of race, religion, or gender we all are impacted in some way by suicide. Our goal is not to eradicate suicide but to impact, one by one, the lives of those who are or may yet be suicidal. Through better research, education, prevention programs, and treatment the American Association of Suicidology has pledged itself to a mission of understanding and preventing suicide as a means of promoting human well-being. AAS, a not-for-profit organization, encourages and welcomes both individual and organizational members. To learn more, visit <http://www.suicidology.org/home>.