

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry
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Pandemic Outreach Update: NCBAM Hope Line Now Offers Outbound Calls

When North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry (NCBAM) began its **Hope Line** service in the summer of 2019 to address social isolation and loneliness among older adults, no one imagined the societal changes that would occur nine months later. Over the course of just a few days in March, 2020, calls to the Hope Line increased exponentially. To meet the demand, the ministry opened the service on weekends and added two lines.

Now open daily, 9:00am – 9:00pm, the Hope Line (**866.578.4673**) continues to receive more than 100 calls each week from older adults—many of whom have been living in isolation for years. Other callers are new to the experience because of self-isolation measures or stay-at-home orders, many of whom are now alone and also experiencing feelings of fear and uncertainty. NCBAM team members and volunteers trained in evidence-based health coach techniques focus on listening and allowing callers to have a safe space to express themselves.

Knowing that many individuals most in need of a friendly call service may not initiate a call, **the Hope Line now offers outbound calls**. The service is free and can be requested by calling 877.506.2226 or by emailing ncbam@bchfamily.org. A link will be sent to sign up for the “friendly call” service. Call recipients must be 65 or older and live in North Carolina. Requests can be made by individuals themselves or by a family member or caregiver.

Whitney Brooks, Board Certified Integrative Health Coach through Duke Integrative Medicine developed and teaches the training provided to all Hope Line communicators. When the pandemic brought unprecedented challenges, Brooks responded with extra guidance. “Many of the incoming Hope Line calls are heavy conversations, and when a volunteer has three of these in a row, that can be pretty stressful. We’ve updated the training to incorporate self-care strategies so that volunteers can learn how to maintain and nourish their own emotional health while helping others.” NCBAM has also implemented a monthly support group meeting for Hope Line volunteers.

NCBAM’s director, Dr. Sandy C. Gregory, began the Hope Line because of the adverse health risks associated with social isolation and loneliness and is now more concerned than ever. “More than one million North Carolinians 65+ are currently experiencing an increased level of isolation – and for an indeterminate length of time. NCBAM wants to help as many as possible by making the Hope Line available for both inbound and outbound calls.”

NORTH CAROLINA BAPTIST AGING MINISTRY

**Hope Line
now offers**

outbound calls!



EMAIL NCBAM@BCHFAMILY.ORG TO REQUEST OUR FRIENDLY CALL SERVICE.
FOR MORE INFO, CALL 877.506.2226.

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Information about NCBAM

North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry (NCBAM) has been connecting aging adults (65 and older) with resources to meet their needs since 2009. Through partnerships with more than 4,300 North Carolina Baptist churches and other organizations, NCBAM responds to the needs of aging adults with approaches on the cutting edge of ministry and culture.

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Available for interviews:



Whitney Brooks, Integrative Health Coach through Duke Integrative Medicine, Hope Line Communications Trainer and NCBAM Consultant



Dr. Sandy Gregory, Ministry Director for NC Baptist Aging Ministry