



## **California 988–Crisis Policy Advisory Group**

### **Quarterly Update**

**September – December 2023**

On July 16, 2022, the nation launched the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, an easy-to-remember 3-digit number (988). In September 2022, the Miles Hall Lifeline and Suicide Prevention Act (AB 988) was signed into law to ensure and expand services for Californians experiencing a behavioral health crisis. Today, when Californians dial 9-8-8, they are directed to one of twelve 988 crisis centers across the state where they receive free, confidential support to help with suicide, mental health, and/or substance use crises. California’s 988 crisis centers are part of the broader 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline network that is continuing to grow and evolve nationally.

AB 988 represents an unprecedented opportunity to design and build a robust behavioral health crisis system with the goals of preventing, responding to and stabilizing crisis. AB 988 requires that the California Health and Human Services Agency (CalHHS) establish and convene a “state 988 advisory group,” which has now been named the 988–Crisis Policy Advisory Group, to advise on the development of recommendations for a five-year implementation plan for a comprehensive 988 system. The resulting report must be delivered to the State Legislature no later than December 31, 2024. Importantly, this bill provides a dedicated revenue source to fund a 9-8-8 system in California.

Over the next year, CalHHS will be publishing a quarterly update to share progress on the work of the 988–Crisis Policy Advisory Group and information on the collective work to create a stronger crisis system in California. The update will highlight activities, achievements, and strategic efforts undertaken, as well as ongoing and upcoming events and activities for the next quarter.

This report covers the period of September through December 2023, which focused on establishing the groundwork for the project launch, forming of the 988–Crisis Policy Advisory Group, and planning for the comprehensive assessment of the behavioral health crisis services system.

## **Project Launch and 988-Crisis Policy Advisory Group Formation**

The focus for the Fall of 2023 was establishing the groundwork for an engaging and collaborative project that will involve diverse stakeholders from inside and outside of the California crisis care continuum. This began with the planning and formation of a 988-Crisis Policy Advisory Group, whose members were selected based on the categories outlined in AB 988 and include diverse representative voices and perspectives from across the state. The 988-Crisis Policy Advisory Group members bring expertise, experience, and diversity of thought to help develop strong, actionable recommendations for a comprehensive 988 crisis system that works for all Californians.

988-Crisis Policy Advisory Group (PAG) members were engaged in one-on-one meetings through November to foster their understanding of project objectives and to surface early themes, challenges and opportunities. Key meetings were also convened between CalHHS, the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS), and the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (CalOES) to coordinate and align efforts.

## **Inaugural 988 Policy Advisory Group Meeting**

On December 13, 2023, CalHHS convened the inaugural meeting of the 988-Crisis Policy Advisory Group (PAG) at the California Endowment in Sacramento.

The meeting was an opportunity to welcome PAG members, review the recommendation process for the five-year implementation plan, and outline roles and responsibilities of PAG members

as described in an associated charter. In addition to level setting, PAG members helped to identify the priorities of six associated Workgroups that will be provide additional opportunities to dive deeper into the complex issues within AB 988,



such as standards to guidance to metrics and data. PAG meetings will continue through 2024 with the following meeting dates:

- February 7, 2024
- April 24, 2024
- June 26, 2024
- August 14, 2024
- September 18, 2024
- November 20, 2024

Members of the public are encouraged to join future PAG meetings and will have the opportunity to make a public comment. Meeting information and recordings will continue to be posted to the [CalHHS website](#), along with a roster of PAG members, and information relevant to the Workgroups.

## **AB 988 Comprehensive Assessment of the Behavioral Health Crisis Services System**

One of the 14 required areas in [AB 988](#) is producing a report of findings from a comprehensive assessment of the behavioral health crisis services system. The report will help inform mechanisms for building on existing community assets, meeting community needs, and identifying new service opportunities and points for interconnection within systems of care. Three primary research questions will drive the comprehensive assessment:

- What are the knowns and unknowns of the state's existing behavioral health crisis system including service capacity and infrastructure? (State Inventory)
- What are the highest priority community needs across the California crisis care continuum? Which communities and populations are disproportionately impacted, and what are some recommendations for meeting those needs? (Needs)
- What are the most substantial gaps and opportunities for policy and practice across the California crisis care continuum to prevent, respond to and stabilize crisis? (Gaps Analysis)

Outreach to various stakeholders will occur throughout the winter and spring to gather additional input as part of the comprehensive assessment. The outreach will take the form of surveys, focus groups, interviews and discussions at existing

recurring gatherings (e.g. local and state coalitions, associations, and convenings).

## **Upcoming 988–Crisis Policy Advisory Workgroup Meetings**

As part of the December 13<sup>th</sup> PAG meeting, CalHHS invited PAG members to participate in one of six 988–Crisis Workgroups. In addition, CalHHS put out a call for members of the public with expertise whose personal and professional expertise could benefit the project. Workgroups were developed and themed based on the 14 recommendation topics contained in [AB 988 legislative code](#).

The workgroups include:

- (1) Comprehensive Assessment of Behavioral Health Crisis Services
- (2) Statewide 988 Standards and Guidance
- (3) 988–911 Behavioral Health Crisis Care Continuum Integration
- (4) Communications
- (5) Data and Metrics
- (6) Funding and Sustainability

The first three Workgroups will launch in January, while the remaining three will launch in May. This phased approach is designed to ensure that insights, recommendations, and questions from Phase 1 inform discussions in Phase 2.

- Phase 1 Workgroups (January – April 2024):
  1. Comprehensive Assessment
  2. Statewide Standards and Guidance
  3. Integration
- Phase 2 Workgroups (May – August 2024):
  4. Communications
  5. Data and Metrics
  6. Funding and Sustainability

Below are the dates for Phase 1 Workgroup Meetings:

- Workgroup 1: Comprehensive Assessment
  - January 30, 2024
  - February 29, 2024
  - March 19, 2024
  - April 11, 2024
- Workgroup 2: Standards and Guidance
  - February 2, 2024
  - February 27, 2024
  - March 20, 2024
  - April 9, 2024

- Workgroup 3: Integration
  - January 31, 2024
  - February 29, 2024
  - March 22, 2024
  - April 12, 2024

Members of the public are encouraged to join the meetings and will have the opportunity to make a public comment. Meeting information and recordings will also be posted to the [CalHHS website](#).

## Upcoming and Ongoing Implementation Activities in Quarter 1 of 2024

In addition to preparing for the 988-Crisis Policy Advisory Group and Workgroup Meetings, Quarter 1 will include development of fact sheets on key topics relevant to the crisis care continuum of interest to PAG members, and continued work on the development of a comprehensive assessment of the behavioral health crisis services system. This assessment will include data queries, surveys, literature reviews, outreach and engagement to stakeholders, and participation in the CalOES Technical Advisory Board meetings.

## Resource Summary



[988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline Site](#) and [988-Crisis Policy Advisory Group Site](#)



[CalHHS Behavioral Health Crisis Care Continuum Plan](#), May 2023.



[AB988 Legislation in Code](#)



[California Office of Emergency Services \(CalOES\) Technical Advisory Board](#)



For more information or to be added to the AB988 Mailing List, please email [AB988Info@chhs.ca.gov](mailto:AB988Info@chhs.ca.gov).

## 2024 Milestones and Activities – Project Timeline

