



**California Health and Human Services Agency (CalHHS)
988-Crisis Workgroup 6: Funding and Sustainability Meeting 1
Meeting Summary
May 30, 2024, | Virtual Meeting**

Meeting Materials and Recording are available on the [988-Crisis Policy Advisory Group website](#). Public Zoom chat from the meeting is included as an Appendix to this summary.

For additional information and resources, please see the following sites:

- [CalHHS Behavioral Health Crisis Care Continuum Plan \(CCC-P\)](#)
- [Presentation on the CCC-P](#) from February 16th, 2023 by Stephanie Welch, the Deputy Secretary of Behavioral Health at CalHHS. (Note: Stephanie’s presentation begins at 54:03 and ends at 1:30:30. The Q&A extends until 1:46:30.)
- [988-Crisis Policy Advisory Group Meeting Summary \(December 13th, 2023\)](#)

Workgroup Members in Attendance:

- **Amanda Miller-McKinney***, Children Now
- **Anete Millers***, California Association of Health Plans
- **Casey Heinzen***, Department of Health Care Services (DHCS)
- **Chad Costello***, California Association of Social Rehabilitation Agencies
- **Christine Stoner-Mertz***, California Alliance
- **Corinne Kamerman***, DHCS
- **Ivan Bhardwaj***, DHCS
- **Jana Lord***, Sycamores
- **Ka Ramirez***, DHCS

- **Kirsten Barlow***, California Hospital Association
- **Lauren Finke***, The Kennedy Forum
- **Michelle Galvan***, Optum Public Sector San Diego
- **Narges Dillon***, Crisis Support Services of Alameda County
- **Phebe Bell***, Nevada County Behavioral Health Department
- **Raven Lopez***, County Behavioral Health Directors Association of California
- **Reuben Wilson***, Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health
- **Ryan Banks***, Turning Point of Central California
- **Shari Sinwelski***, Didi Hirsch
- **Stephanie Welch***, CalHHS
- **Tara Gamboa-Eastman***, Steinberg Institute

Project Staff in Attendance:

- **Ali Vangrow**, CalHHS
- **Anh Thu Bui**, CalHHS
- **Hailey Shapiro**, CalHHS
- **Allie Franklin**, Health Management Associates
- **Betsy Uhrman**, Health Management Associates
- **Nicholas Williams**, Health Management Associates
- **Rob Muschler**, Health Management Associates

Workgroup Members Not in Attendance:

- **Andrea Tolaio**, Family Service Agency of the Central Coast
- **Curt Guillot**, California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (CalOES)
- **Diana Vasquez-Luna**, California Department of Finance
- **Jacob Ruiz**, Riverside University Health System
- **John Boyd**, Kaiser Permanente (Northern California)
- **Kenna Chic**
- **Melissa Lawton**, Seneca Family of Agencies

*Attended virtually

Review of Agenda and Session Objectives

Rob Muschler, Senior Consultant, Health Management Associates, began the workgroup meeting by explaining Zoom functionality, overview the Workgroup 6 Meeting 1 agenda, and introducing the co-chairs and member list. He then

provided an overview of how to submit public comments and the meeting code of conduct.

Rob then provided described the AB88 project structure and desired outcomes, as well as the Workgroup's areas of focus. He also briefly reviewed input from the December Policy Advisory Group meeting and from other workgroups that were relevant to the meetings topic of funding and sustainability.

Surcharge Utilization – Legislative Guidance

Rob Muschler shared language from the AB 988 legislation and referenced California and United States codes that govern the use of AB 988 surcharge dollars. He noted that the overview was intended to provide some parameters for the group discussion regarding the use of AB988 funds.

Discussion of Fund Utilization and Criteria

Discussion 1: Based on the parameters outlined in the legislation and applicable codes, how could funds be best utilized to ensure an effective, equitable, and accessible crisis response system?

Allie Franklin asked for feedback from the group:

- One member noted the importance of ensuring that the system has the capacity to respond in a timely fashion.
- Another member asked whether the discussion should be focused on the Medi-Cal-funded crisis system or the system as a whole? This sparked discussion about the need to blend and braid funding to meet the needs of all Californians. Another member noted the need to maximize and leverage Medi-Cal wherever possible.
- A member commented on the need for regulators to be able to regulate across the crisis continuum, clarify guidance, and enforce existing parity requirements for commercial insurers.
- Another member mentioned special populations – such as system-involved youth – and opportunities and challenges to leveraging other Medi-Cal initiatives.
- A member noted that surcharge dollars could be used to support

technology solutions to bridge the gap between 988 crisis centers and county-operated dispatch. They noted that having more access to information – such as visibility into the queue – would be helpful. They also mentioned creating data dashboards.

- A member noted that 988 call, text, and chat volume changes month-to-month and the need to factor that into funding and future projections. They also noted that they anticipate call volume increasing, which will make it difficult to meet expected standards without additional funding. Another member noted that 988 crisis centers are funded via lump contracts and not via a fee-for-service model. Alternatively, Medi-Cal mobile crisis teams are fee-for-service. They noted the challenges that these different models can cause.
- A member asked whether the state would open the 988 system to new call center providers. They also asked how the state could ensure that 988 centers are sufficiently connected to their local community. In response, another workgroup member noted that adding more centers could make the system less financially efficient and might make standardization across centers more difficult.
- A member commented in the chat that surcharge dollars could be used for staff training.
- A member noted that, when the legislation was drafted, the surcharge was thought of more as a backstop to ensure access to this vital service. It was intended to cover direct costs and not much more. In response, another member added that existing funding streams – such as Medi-Cal and commercial insurance – should be utilized first.
- A member who works at a crisis center noted that there are some unanswered questions about technology needs as well. They noted the statewide platform that is being developed, and that centers are unsure if the system can accommodate the other non-988 call lines they answer. Another member also noted the technology needs of mobile teams.
- A member who oversees a mobile crisis team noted that 40% of their calls are non-Medi-Cal. They noted that in many cases they are not able to gather enough information to bill insurance and asked whether the

state might build in some type of loss ratio. Another mobile crisis provider agreed and noted challenges in paying for travel time. Another provider added the challenge of having staff ready to respond, but not being able to bill for the downtime. Further discussion ensued regarding insurance reimbursement and the firehouse model.

Rob then introduced the second discussion question and asked for input.

Discussion 2: What criteria should be considered in order to receive 988 surcharge dollars?

- A member noted the need to have more connectivity between the 988 centers and the community, especially in rural areas.
- A member who leads a crisis center commented on data collection requirements. They noted that current data collection is based on imminent risk, with more information requested from those at high risk. If geo-routing was improved, it would be easier to provide more tailored, localized support. They noted that sometimes asking questions about demographics and location can lead to callers hanging up.
- A workgroup member noted existing criteria, including that to be a 988 crisis center you need to become a member of the national network, which requires accreditation amongst other things. The member also noted that criteria on the volume of calls handled and expected could be considered.
- A workgroup member noted that when thinking about the future state, we should consider whether we'd like more regional or localized call centers. And, if regionalized, how to staff them with individuals who have better knowledge of local resources and can serve as credible messengers. The member noted that if the centers aren't properly staffed, residents and counties may ultimately use alternate lines which causes more complications.
- Another member representing county behavioral health added that the 12 crisis centers have been doing this work for a long time, but that the system isn't aligned with local resources currently. The member wondered about county access lines becoming 988 centers, and noted the potential opportunities to braid funding if the state went that route. In

response, a workgroup member who runs a crisis center stated that county access lines wouldn't all have the capacity to do this, noting that the current crisis centers sometimes cover county access lines on nights and weekends. They also added that, through the 988 network, crisis centers can serve as backups to one another. The member representing a county noted responded by saying that they didn't think the answer was 58 county access lines serving as 988 centers or the existing 12 centers, but instead wanted to see more flexibility based on the local needs of different communities and related workforce capacity issues.

- A workgroup member added that another criterion should be the ability to meet the established performance standards.
- Anh Thu Bui, CalHHS Project Director, called attention to AB 988 and the requirement to file an annual expenditure and outcomes report to CalOES, which has some requirements. She noted that these requirements are outlined in 53134.4 and include budget number, job classification of personnel, number of individuals served, outcomes for individuals served if known, health coverage status of individuals served if known, amongst others. She also added that in 2025 there's a required measure of system performance that includes wait times and the ability to meet demands for services and in 2030 there will be reporting on the amount billed to and reimbursed by public and private insurance.

Public Comment Period

Rob Muschler shared instructions for how to make public comment and said that comments can also be submitted at any time via email at AB988Info@chhs.ca.gov.

A member of the public stated:

“Thank you for the opportunity. The issues I want to raise have maybe been raised already. Unfortunately, I had to take a call earlier. But as CFO of Didi Hirsch, funding is a primary concern for me. We're switching over to a 3rd party administrator and just submitted a budget which we're told is going to be subject to a de minimis 10% indirect rate and our minimum rate is going up

significantly. While we were responsible for the distribution of state funds for 988, we had a much larger cost basis for all the other call centers. That's disappeared, and the de minimis rate will leave us with half a million dollars or more of unreimbursed costs that we can't recover. So, we'd like to have that reconsidered. There doesn't appear to be a legal reason for it. The other issue is the issue of equipment. It's not clear how we're going to handle equipment from CalOES. And we also have a timing issue, in that we're not allowed to include equipment in our budget, and we're increasing our staffing, but CalOES is not yet ready to support us, so we have a funding gap there."

Meeting Wrap-Up and Next Steps

Rob Muschler mentioned that the next workgroup meeting will be held on July 29th, following the next Policy Advisory Group meeting in June.

APPENDIX I: PUBLIC ZOOM CHAT

13:05:21 From Kirsten Barlow - CHA to Hosts and panelists:

Sorry, I will not be on video because traveling

13:05:48 From Allie Franklin to Hosts and panelists:

No worries, Kirsten. We are glad you are here

13:05:57 From Chad Costello - CASRA to Hosts and panelists:

On the road as well

13:06:45 From Allie Franklin to Hosts and panelists:

Thank you, Chad. Glad you are here, too

13:07:34 From Allie Franklin to Hosts and panelists:

AB988Info@chhs.ca.gov

13:07:39 From Matt Taylor - Didi Hirsch to Hosts and panelists:

Hi all. I am serving as Shari Sinwelski's designee from Didi Hirsch today, per approval from HHS and HMA.

13:17:04 From Allie Franklin to Hosts and panelists:

<https://codes.findlaw.com/ca/government-code/gov-sect-53123-4/>

13:17:21 From Allie Franklin to Hosts and panelists:

<https://1.next.westlaw.com/Link/Document/FullText?findType=L&originatingContext=document&transitionType=DocumentItem&pubNum=1000222&refType=LQ&originatingDoc=1a64407c0a5ea11ed9c4884bd25368be0&cite=CARTS41020>

13:18:01 From Allie Franklin to Hosts and panelists:

<https://1.next.westlaw.com/Link/Document/FullText?findType=L&originatingContext=document&transitionType=DocumentItem&pubNum=1000222&refType=LQ&originatingDoc=1a64407c0a5ea11ed9c4884bd25368be0&cite=CARTS41020>

13:18:37 From Allie Franklin to Hosts and panelists:

[https://1.next.westlaw.com/Link/Document/FullText?findType=L&originatingContext=document&transitionType=DocumentItem&pubNum=1077005&refType=SL&originatingDoc=1a64407c2a5ea11ed935ca9df56a7bd59&cite=UUID\(19D61335082-3611EB82B8C-9A82FA57DDE\)](https://1.next.westlaw.com/Link/Document/FullText?findType=L&originatingContext=document&transitionType=DocumentItem&pubNum=1077005&refType=SL&originatingDoc=1a64407c2a5ea11ed935ca9df56a7bd59&cite=UUID(19D61335082-3611EB82B8C-9A82FA57DDE))

13:18:48 From Allie Franklin to Hosts and panelists:

[https://1.next.westlaw.com/Link/Document/FullText?findType=L&originatingContext=document&transitionType=DocumentItem&pubNum=1077005&refType=SL&originatingDoc=1a64455e1a5ea11ed935ca9df56a7bd59&cite=UUID\(18594EE10FD-5C11EA8833C-6C3E242DB36\)](https://1.next.westlaw.com/Link/Document/FullText?findType=L&originatingContext=document&transitionType=DocumentItem&pubNum=1077005&refType=SL&originatingDoc=1a64455e1a5ea11ed935ca9df56a7bd59&cite=UUID(18594EE10FD-5C11EA8833C-6C3E242DB36))

13:19:02 From Allie Franklin to Hosts and panelists:

<https://codes.findlaw.com/ca/government-code/gov-sect-53123-4/>

13:21:02 From Michelle Galvan to Hosts and panelists:

Staffing is critical

13:26:15 From Phebe Bell - Nevada County to Everyone:

do we have any current state data - like roughly how much will the 988 surcharge generate and what are the current global costs of 988/other crisis lines, mobile crisis systems?

13:33:48 From Nicholas Williams to Everyone:

CalOES figures show \$44 million in revenues for 2023-2024:

<https://www.caloes.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/PSC/Documents/9-8-8-Surcharge-Presentation.pdf>

13:34:11 From Jana Lord - Sycamores to Hosts and panelists:

Completely agree with Phobe! There is a natural tension that exists between expectations of our mobile crisis teams (to be available to provide timely response vs fee for service which may not support the number of teams needed in high volume times)

13:34:47 From Ryan Banks - Turning Point of Central Valley to Hosts and panelists:
Staff training costs

13:34:58 From Tara Gamboa-Eastman - Stienberg Institute to Hosts and panelists:
I'm not sure there's a ton of other uses for the fee authorized under the bill.

13:37:20 From Ryan Banks - Turning Point of Central Valley to Hosts and panelists:
Costs to promote and educate the public about 988 access and supports.

13:38:08 From Betsy Uhrman to Howard Goldman And all panelists:

Hi Howard, I hope you're well. I see your hand raised. Do you want to be put on the list to make a comment during the public comment period (anticipated to start between 1:30-1:45)?

13:38:49 From Narges Dillon - CSS Alameda County to Hosts and panelists:
so far, there hasn't been a coordinated effort to advertise 988.

13:40:36 From Phebe Bell - Nevada County to Hosts and panelists:
i want to add my two cents on the need to bring more call centers in. Small rural counties in particular are not well represented in the current mix and if 988 is the entry point to the overall crisis system, that connectivity is critical. I agree any new designated centers need to meet quality criteria but i feel like this access to broader crisis services and local system connectivity is a critical component of an effective system.

13:42:59 From Narges Dillon - CSS Alameda County to Hosts and panelists:
not be too in the weeds, but currently the allowable indirect on 988 funds is 10% and that makes it that centers are subsidizing 988

13:44:14 From Amanda Miller-McKinney - Children Now to Hosts and panelists:
Agree with that thought re technology on the side of the mobile crisis teams as well

13:49:15 From Phebe Bell - Nevada County to Hosts and panelists:
and can 988 bill private insurance too?

13:49:28 From Lauren Finke - The Kennedy Forum to Hosts and panelists:
CDI regulations covering AB 988:

<https://legaldocs.insurance.ca.gov/publicdocs/RegulationHome>

13:49:34 From Lauren Finke - The Kennedy Forum to Hosts and panelists:

draft regulations

13:51:15 From Narges Dillon - CSS Alameda County to Hosts and panelists:

988 call centers billing insurance goes back to the creation of barriers to access.

maybe a % by penetration rate in a county? if they have x% users, they contribute x% to the crisis system?

13:53:56 From Phebe Bell - Nevada County to Hosts and panelists:

yes agreed Narges. i think the whole crisis system should be paid in some way like you are describing! we don't want people's co pays and deductibles to be barriers to accessing mobile crisis too!

13:55:45 From Christine Stoner-Mertz - CA Alliance to Everyone:

Sorry to be late. Budget hearings. I'll be off camera as I am driving.

13:56:03 From Allie Franklin to Hosts and panelists:

Glad you are here, Christine

13:58:43 From Matt Taylor - Didi Hirsch to Hosts and panelists:

Another key funding matter for 988 centers is the timing and certainty of future funding. As volume and service expectations grow, centers need to hire more staff. The 988 centers need to know they will be able to sustain those hires, especially in the lead up to next fiscal years.

14:02:19 From Raven Lopez - CBHDA to Hosts and panelists:

Apologies everyone. I have to leave for another meeting.

14:02:30 From Allie Franklin to Hosts and panelists:

Thank you for being here, Raven

14:04:25 From Phebe Bell - Nevada County to Hosts and panelists:

i totally agree Jana!

14:06:10 From Amanda Miller-McKinney - Children Now to Hosts and panelists:

I agree with Jana's comment. It is critically important for staff knowledge and appropriateness for special populations as well

14:06:58 From Jana Lord - Sycamores to Hosts and panelists:

County access line certified as 988 call centers is a good idea!

14:07:14 From Phebe Bell - Nevada County to Hosts and panelists:

Yes Tara! Every county has to run a 24/7 line that has to be staffed adequately - if they can prove they do services at the quality level that Matt spoke to (accredited etc) then they absolutely should be able to be a 988 center - not all would want to but for those that do, this would really solve that local connectivity issue