

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1134

As Reported by House Committee On:
Health Care & Wellness

Title: An act relating to implementing the 988 behavioral health crisis response and suicide prevention system.

Brief Description: Implementing the 988 behavioral health crisis response and suicide prevention system.

Sponsors: Representatives Orwall, Bronoske, Peterson, Berry, Ramel, Leavitt, Callan, Doglio, Macri, Caldier, Simmons, Timmons, Reeves, Chopp, Lekanoff, Gregerson, Thai, Paul, Wylie, Stonier, Davis, Kloba, Riccelli, Fosse and Farivar.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care & Wellness: 1/17/23, 2/8/23 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Establishes an endorsement for 988 rapid response crisis teams that meet staffing, vehicle, and response time standards, as well as a grant program to support them.
- Directs the University of Washington to develop recommendations for the creation of crisis workforce and resilience training collaboratives to offer voluntary regional trainings for personnel in the behavioral health crisis system.
- Directs the Department of Health to develop informational materials and a social media campaign to promote the 988 crisis hotline and related crisis lines.
- Establishes liability protection for several entities and personnel for activities related to the dispatching decisions of 988 crisis hotline staff and the transfer of calls between the 911 line and the 988 crisis hotline.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

- Extends several dates related to reporting, designated 988 crisis contact center hubs, and funding the new crisis call center system platform.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE & WELLNESS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 16 members: Representatives Riccelli, Chair; Bateman, Vice Chair; Schmick, Ranking Minority Member; Hutchins, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Barnard, Bronoske, Davis, Graham, Macri, Maycumber, Mosbrucker, Orwall, Simmons, Stonier, Thai and Tharinger.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative Harris.

Staff: Christopher Blake (786-7392).

Background:

Behavioral Health Crisis Services.

Crisis mental health services are intended to stabilize a person in mental health crisis to prevent further deterioration, provide immediate treatment and intervention, and provide treatment services in the least restrictive environment available. Substance use disorder detoxification services are provided to persons to assist with the safe and effective withdrawal from substances. Behavioral health crisis services include: crisis telephone support, crisis outreach services, crisis stabilization services, crisis peer support services, withdrawal management services, and emergency involuntary detention services.

Behavioral health administrative services organizations (BHASOs) are entities contracted with the Health Care Authority to administer certain behavioral health services and programs for all individuals within a regional service area, including behavioral health crisis services and the administration of the Involuntary Treatment Act. In addition, each BHASO must maintain a behavioral health crisis hotline for its region.

National Suicide Prevention Hotline.

In October 2020 Congress passed the National Suicide Hotline Designation Act of 2020 (Act) which designates the number 988 as the universal telephone number within the United States for the purpose of accessing the National Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Crisis Hotline system that is maintained by the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and the Veterans Crisis Line. In addition, the Act expressly authorizes states to collect a fee on commercial mobile services or Internet protocol-enabled voice services for costs attributed to: (1) ensuring the efficient and effective routing of calls made to the 988 National Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Crisis Hotline to an appropriate crisis center; and (2) personnel and the provision of acute mental health crisis outreach and stabilization services

by directly responding to calls to the crisis centers.

In 2021 House Bill 1477 was enacted which established several changes to the behavioral health crisis system in response to the adoption of 988 as the new phone number for the National Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Crisis Hotline. The bill established crisis call center hubs to provide crisis intervention services, case management, referrals, and connection to crisis system participants beginning July 1, 2024. The bill also charged the state with developing a new technology platform for managing communications with the 988 hotline and a tax was imposed upon phone lines to support the activities. In addition, the Crisis Response Improvement Strategy Committee was established to review and report on several items related to the behavioral health crisis system.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Designated 988 Contact Hubs.

Crisis call center hubs are renamed "designated 988 contact hubs" (988 hubs) and further defined as a contact center that streamlines clinical interventions and access to resources for people experiencing a behavioral health crisis. The date by which the Department of Health (Department) must adopt rules for designating 988 hubs is extended from July 1, 2023, to January 1, 2025, and the date for designating the 988 hubs is extended from July 1, 2024, to January 1, 2026.

The 988 hubs must display 988 crisis hotline information on their websites, including a description of what a caller should expect when contacting the 988 hub, a description of the options available to the caller such as specialized call lines for veterans, American Indian and Alaska Native persons, Spanish-speaking persons, LGBTQ populations, and persons connected with the agricultural community.

The 988 hubs must develop and submit protocols regarding interactions between the 988 hub and the 911 call centers within the region to the Department and receive approval of those protocols. The 988 hubs, in collaboration with the region's behavioral health administrative services organization (BHASO), must also develop and submit protocols related to the dispatching of 988 rapid response crisis teams (988 teams) to the Health Care Authority (Authority) and receive approval of those protocols. The 988 hubs must train employees to screen persons contacting the 988 crisis hotline to determine if they are connected to the agricultural community and if they would prefer to be connected with an agricultural hotline. Data and reports submitted by 988 hubs must include deidentified information related to the number of contacts connected to the agricultural community and the nature of those contacts. The Authority must monitor trends in 988 crisis hotline caller data and submit an annual report to the Governor and the Legislature summarizing the data and trends in the information. If requested, 988 hubs must enter into data sharing agreements with regional BHASOs to provide 988 crisis hotline caller data and reports related to monthly call volume, answer rate, abandonment rate, answer time, and 988 team

data. Any information shared by the 988 hubs with BHASOs must also be reported to the Authority and the Department.

The Department may fund the partnerships between 988 call centers and 988 hubs with public safety answering points to increase the coordination and transfer of behavioral health calls received by certified public safety telecommunicators that are better addressed by the 988 system.

The behavioral health and suicide prevention crisis call center system platform must be fully funded by July 1, 2024, rather than July 1, 2023. The Department and the Authority must include the 988 hubs in the decision-making process for selecting the technology platform. The requirement that the technology platform be able to deploy all crisis response services, including 988 teams, designated crisis responders, and fire department mobile integrated health teams is removed.

988 Crisis Hotline Awareness.

The Department must develop informational materials and a social media campaign to promote the 988 crisis hotline and crisis hotlines for veterans, American Indians and Alaska Native persons, and other populations. The Department must make the informational materials available to medical clinics, behavioral health clinics, media, kindergarten through grade 12 schools, higher education institutions, and health care professionals attending suicide prevention training.

Outpatient behavioral health agencies must display the 988 crisis hotline number in common areas and on after-hours phone messages. Inpatient and residential behavioral health agencies must include the 988 crisis hotline number in the discharge summary provided to persons being discharged.

Endorsed 988 Rapid Response Crisis Teams.

Mobile rapid response crisis teams are renamed "988 rapid response crisis teams" (988 teams) and their responsibility for providing follow up support is changed to transporting persons to the necessary community-based resources. By April 1, 2024, the Authority must establish standards for issuing an endorsement to 988 teams. Endorsed 988 teams are to be considered a primary response team for individuals determined by the dispatching 988 hub to be experiencing a significant behavioral health emergency that requires an urgent in-person response. The decision for a 988 team to become endorsed is voluntary.

The standards for an endorsement relate to staffing, training, transportation, and response times. The 988 teams must have credentialed and supervised staff employed by a behavioral health agency and include certified peer counselors as a best practice. The 988 teams may include personnel from other participating entities such as fire departments, emergency medical services, public health, medical facilities, nonprofit organizations, and city and county governments. Law enforcement personnel may not participate on a 988 team. The response times are established in two phases so that:

- between January 1, 2025, through December 1, 2026, at least 80 percent of the time endorsed 988 teams in an urban area must arrive at the person's location within 30 minutes of being dispatched, in a suburban area they must arrive at the person's location within 40 minutes, and in a rural area they must be en route within 15 minutes of being dispatched; and
- on and after January 1, 2027, at least 80 percent of the time endorsed 988 teams in an urban area must arrive at the person's location within 20 minutes of being dispatched, in a suburban area they must arrive at the person's location within 30 minutes of being dispatched, and in a rural areas they must be en route within 10 minutes of being dispatched.

A grant program administered by the Authority is created to support the establishment of new endorsed 988 teams and the participation of existing endorsed 988 teams. Specifically, the grant program shall issue:

- system expansion grants to support 988 teams meeting endorsement standards in locations in which there is a lack of such services;
- technical assistance grants to endorsed 988 teams with unique challenges in meeting the endorsement standards; and
- participation grants to endorsed 988 teams based on response volumes, the characteristics of the response area, such as the rural nature of the area or the particular cultural and linguistic needs for serving the population.

Ten percent of the annual receipts for the Statewide 988 Behavioral Health Crisis Response and Suicide Prevention Line Account must be dedicated to the grant program and the endorsement activities. Up to 30 percent of these funds for the grant program and endorsement activities must be dedicated to 988 teams affiliated with a tribe in Washington.

Training.

The University of Washington (UW) School of Social Work, in consultation with the Washington Council for Behavioral Health and BHASOs, must plan for regional collaboration among behavioral health providers and first responders working within the 988 crisis response system. In addition, they must standardize practices and protocols and develop a needs assessment for trainings. The UW must convene a stakeholder group of representatives of BHASOs, crisis service providers, 988 crisis call centers, persons with lived experience, and a statewide organization of field experts. By June 30, 2024, the UW, with the assistance of the stakeholder group must develop an assessment of training needs, a mapping of current and future funded crisis response providers, and a comprehensive review of all required behavioral health training.

The UW School of Social Work, in collaboration with the stakeholder group, must develop recommendations for the creation of crisis workforce and resilience training collaboratives to offer voluntary regional trainings for personnel in the behavioral health crisis system. The recommendations must consider: integrating 988-specific training into existing behavioral health training; identifying trainings on behavioral health crisis system topics;

identifying best practice approaches to working with specific populations; identifying ways to provide training specific to the agricultural community; identifying ways to increase public access to and participation in trainings on topics related to the behavioral health crisis system; and establishing ways to sustain and fund the crisis workforce and resilience training collaboratives, as well as a timeline for implementation. The UW School of Social Work must submit a report to the Governor and the appropriate committees of the Legislature by December 31, 2024.

By July 1, 2024, suicide prevention training for health care providers must include content on the availability of and services offered by the 988 crisis hotline and the behavioral health crisis response and suicide prevention system and best practices for assisting persons to access them.

Liability Protection.

Acts or omissions related to the dispatching decisions of 988 crisis call center staff or 988 hub staff with dispatching responsibilities do not impose liability upon a 988 crisis call center or 988 hub and their staff, members of a 988 team, or public safety answering points and their staff. The liability protection applies to acts or omissions occurring in good faith, within the scope of the staff person's responsibilities, and in accordance with approved dispatching procedures.

Acts or omissions related to the transfer of calls from the 911 line to the 988 crisis hotline or from the 988 crisis hotline to the 911 line by certified public safety telecommunicators, 988 crisis call center staff, or 988 hub staff do not impose liability upon public safety answering points and their staff, a 988 crisis call center or 988 hub and their staff, or members of a mobile rapid response crisis team. The liability protection applies to acts or omissions occurring in good faith, within the scope of the staff person's responsibilities, and in accordance with approved call system transfer protocols.

Crisis Response Improvement Strategy Committee.

The Office of Financial Management is removed as the agency to contract with the Behavioral Health Institute to support the Crisis Response Improvement Strategy Committee (Strategy Committee) and is replaced with the authorization of the Behavioral Health Institute to contract for those support services. A member of the Strategy Committee with lived experience is added to the Steering Committee of the Strategy Committee.

The 988 Geolocation Subcommittee is created to examine privacy issues related to federal planning efforts to route 988 crisis hotline calls based on a person's location. The 988 Geolocation Subcommittee must examine ways to implement federal recommendations in a manner that maintains public and clinical confidence in the 988 crisis hotline.

The Strategy Committee is extended by one year until June 30, 2025. The Strategy Committee must submit an additional progress report by January 1, 2024, and the final

report is delayed until January 1, 2025.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill changes the name of "designated 988 crisis contact center hubs" to "designated 988 contact hubs" (988 hubs) and specifies that they streamline clinical interventions and access to resources for people experiencing a behavioral health crisis. Funding may be used to support 988 call centers and 988 hubs to partner with public safety answering points to coordinate and transfer 911 calls to the 988 system when it is appropriate. Contracts between the Department of Health (Department) and the 988 hubs must: (1) include screening of persons contacting the 988 crisis hotline to determine if they are connected to the agricultural community; (2) require the development of dispatch protocols for 988 rapid response crisis teams (988 teams) in collaboration with the region's behavioral health administrative services organizations (BHASOs); (3) include deidentified information regarding the number of contacts with the 988 crisis hotline that are connected to the agricultural community; and (4) require the creation of data sharing agreements with BHASOs to provide 988 crisis hotline caller data and reports and that the information be further shared with the Health Care Authority (Authority) and the Department.

The substitute bill changes the name of "mobile rapid response crisis teams" to "988 rapid response crisis teams" (988 teams) and specifies that they respond to persons contacting the 988 crisis hotline and provide transportation to community-based resources. The Authority, not the Department, is designated as the agency responsible for endorsing 988 teams. The 988 teams must include credentialed and supervised staff from a behavioral health agency and may include other personnel to participate from fire departments, emergency medical services, public health, medical facilities, nonprofit organizations, and city and county governments. Law enforcement personnel may not staff a 988 team. Peer counselors must be included on 988 teams to the extent practicable. The standard for 988 teams responding in rural areas is changed from arriving within 60 minutes between January 1, 2025, and December 1, 2026, and 45 minutes after January 1, 2027, to being en route within 15 minutes between January 1, 2025, and December 1, 2026, and within 10 minutes after January 1, 2027.

The substitute bill eliminates the creation of a crisis training and secondary trauma program at the University of Washington (UW). The UW School of Social Work, in consultation with the Washington Council for Behavioral Health and the BHASOs, must plan for collaboration among behavioral health providers and first responders, standardizing practices, and developing a needs assessment for training. The UW must convene a stakeholder group of representatives of BHASOs, crisis service providers, 988 crisis call centers, persons with lived experience, and a statewide organization of field experts. The UW School of Social Work, in collaboration with the stakeholder group, must develop recommendations for the creation of crisis workforce and resilience training collaboratives to offer voluntary regional trainings for personnel in the behavioral health crisis system. The recommendations must include: integrating 988-specific training into existing

behavioral health training; identifying trainings on behavioral health crisis system topics; identifying best practice approaches to working with specific populations; identifying ways to provide training specific to the agricultural community; and establishing ways to sustain and fund the crisis workforce and resilience training collaboratives, as well as a timeline for implementation. The UW School of Social Work must submit a report to the Governor and the appropriate committees of the Legislature by December 31, 2024.

The substitute bill specifies that the information about the 988 crisis system to be incorporated into suicide prevention training for health professionals is about the availability of services offered by the 988 crisis hotline and best practices for assisting persons to access it and the behavioral health crisis system.

The substitute bill removes the Office of Financial Management as the agency to contract with the Behavioral Health Institute to support the Crisis Response Improvement Strategy Committee and authorizes the Behavioral Health Institute to contract for those support services. Persons with lived experience related to behavioral health issues, suicide attempt, or a suicide loss are added to the list of people that the Department must consult with in developing its social media campaign.

The substitute bill requires the Authority to monitor trends in 988 crisis hotline caller data and submit an annual report to the Governor and the Legislature beginning December 1, 2027.

The substitute bill limits the requirement to display the 988 crisis hotline number to outpatient behavioral health agencies. Inpatient and residential behavioral health agencies must include the 988 crisis hotline number in discharge summaries.

The substitute bill removes reference to the new 988 technology system being able to deploy all crisis response services, including 988 teams, designated crisis responders, and fire department mobile integrated health teams.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 11, 2023.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This bill creates a template for the rapid response teams which are a critical component of meeting people experiencing a behavioral health crisis where they are and getting them to the services that they need as quickly as possible. This bill lays the

groundwork for mobile rapid response units specifically trained to deal with behavioral health crisis de-escalation and care which mitigates police response and frees up law enforcement to attend to other needs. All Washingtonians should feel comfortable calling 988 knowing that the response they receive will be from trained behavioral health care workers and that law enforcement is only sent out in rare and appropriate circumstances.

It will be good to have training in the 988 system and crisis response for providers so they are familiar with what is available and how to use the system. Communities from across Washington should be stakeholders in the training so that it is truly culturally competent for all. Training is a critical component of the bill and ensuring that the training happens in conjunction with the BHASOs at the regional level will be important. This bill helps provide training to rapid response team personnel which is designed to be regional. The secondary trauma training is important because this is difficult work. The bill ensures that behavioral health care workers receive the training they need for crisis services.

The development of informational materials, a social media campaign, and display of the 988 information will ensure that more people become aware of the service. There is support for creating the informational materials and the social media campaign for 988. The informational materials and social media campaign are important because the general public will not know when to call 911 or 988.

As more entities build out their capacity to respond, the issue of liability will be a critical concern for growing the system in order to get people the services that they need safely and efficiently. The bill ensures that 988 call center employees are afforded the same liability protections as 911 workers.

It is good to see the extension of some of the dates to allow more time to implement some of the bill's goals. This bill creates a much needed framework for developing standards and practices for organizations to become a part of the 988 crisis response system. This bill shows that the contributions of stakeholders with lived experience will be a top priority by having them on the steering committee. There is support for establishing the Geolocation Subcommittee, including the 988 call centers in the decision making process for the technology platform, and adding the liability protections.

(Opposed) None.

(Other) The social media campaign aligns with the work of the Department of Health (Department) to make sure that people know the service is available. The extension of the rulemaking deadline for crisis contact center hubs is helpful to allow for equitable input from tribal nations and other community partners. There needs to be continued work on the implementation of the geolocation information. There needs to be clarification on the definition and roles of what an existing mobile crisis response team is to differentiate between it and the co-responder teams and the rapid response teams. The endorsement of the mobile rapid response crisis teams should remain at the Health Care Authority, rather

than the Department. The response timelines should not be in contract, not statute, since there is no data to inform what a timely response is. There needs to be more work on the financing conversation.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Tina Orwall, prime sponsor; Bipasha Mukherjee; Brad Banks, Behavioral Health Administrative Services Organizations; Sarah Chesemore; Diane Mayes, Crisis Connections; Joan Miller, Washington Council for Behavioral Health; Zach Duncan, The Crisis Clinic of Thurston and Mason Counties; Tom Davis, Veterans Legislative Coalition; Kristen Wells; Paula Sardinas, Washington Build Back Black Alliance and FMS Global Strategies; Vicki Lowe, American Indian Health Commission for Washington State; Kyle Moore, City of SeaTac; Anna Nepomuceno, National Alliance on Mental Illness Washington; Kelly Rider, King County; and Joelle Craft, Washington Community Action Network.

(Other) Keri Waterland, Health Care Authority; and Michele Roberts, Department of Health.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.