



Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Acting Secretary

February 7, 2023

The Honorable Joseline A. Peña-Melnyk
Chair, House Health and Government Operations Committee
Room 241, House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: HB 271 – 9–8–8 Trust Fund – Funding – Letter of Information

Dear Chair Peña-Melnyk and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) respectfully submits this letter of information for House Bill (HB) 271 – 9–8–8 Trust Fund – Funding. The 9–8–8 Trust Fund (Fund) is a non-lapsing fund, established in 2022, to provide funds for the reimbursement of costs associated with designating and maintaining 988 as the universal number for the national suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline. The Fund also supports the development and implementation of a statewide initiative for the coordination and delivery of the continuum of behavioral health crisis response services.

Maryland successfully launched the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline on July 18, 2022 using funds from the Federal Government. The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline offers free, confidential, 24/7 call, text and chat access to trained crisis counselors who can help people experiencing suicidal, substance use, and/or mental health crisis, or any other kind of emotional distress. The goal of 988 is to provide immediate crisis intervention and support. According to the most recent data from the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA), in November 2022 the 988 Lifeline routed 402,798 contacts.¹

HB 271 requires the Governor to include in the annual budget bill for fiscal year 2025 an appropriation of \$12,000,000 to the Fund. MDH respectfully recommends that the mandated appropriation language be removed. Please see the attached proposed funding sources. We will continue to work with SAMHSA, other federal agencies, and other stakeholders to identify additional sources of funding.

If the Committee does decide to move forward with this legislation, MDH respectfully recommends that the Committee confer with the appropriate budget committee and the Department of Budget and Management for further discussion as part of the budget process.

If you have any questions, please contact Megan Peters, Acting Director of Governmental Affairs, at megan.peters@maryland.gov or (410) 260-3190.

Sincerely,

Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H.
Acting Secretary

¹ 988 Lifeline Performance Metrics, November 2022 <https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/988/performance-metrics>



988 in Maryland

Maryland 988 Strategic Plan Implementation

Upcoming Key Implementation Dates SAMHSA Grant	
June 2022	Finalize data reporting (KPI) with 988 Call Centers Submit Behavioral Disparity Impact Statement to SAMHSA Submit Quality Improvement Plan to SAMHSA Have First Conversations about 988 and 911 Coordination
July 2022	Review Key Performance Indicators (KPI) Report Execute on next steps to move 911 and 988 coordination conversation forward Continue messaging to various groups reminding of the change 1-800 # to 988 # July 16, 2022 - 988 LAUNCHES NATIONWIDE July 30, 2022 - Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) Annual Goals Due SAMHSA Grant 988 Public Awareness Starts
September 2022	Submit 988 chats and texts coverage plan to SAMHSA Design and Implement Continuous Performance and QI Process
December 2022	Target Date for Maryland CONTACT ANSWER RATES 90%+
March 2023	March 30, 2023 - Submit Landscape Analysis of Center Response procedures March 30, 2023 - Submit Maryland 988 Sustainability Plan to SAMHSA

Integration of Crisis Response Services

The Maryland Crisis Model

- Somewhere to call (hotline)
- Someone to see a person in crisis (mobile crisis teams)
- Somewhere to go (crisis center/urgent care/safe station)

Currently being developed by Maryland Crisis System Workgroup

- Seeks to provide care coordination, navigation, and partnerships as a foundation of the system
- 988 will serve as a key component to the system's success
- Need to change narrative – instead of calling 911 for behavioral health crisis – educate public to call 988.

Care Coordination with 211 MD

- New project to provide support to hospital discharge planners seeking outpatient treatment for hard-to-place patients with behavioral health disorders
- 211 MD will provide phone and electronic communication between Hospital Emergency Departments, 211, and BHA Care Coordinators
- Electronic portal, data collection, and follow up are part of the project

Funding Source	State Fiscal Year					Funding Source Totals
	SFY 22	SFY 23	SFY 24	SFY 25	SFY 26	
Estimated Savings: 211 MD, Inc. Annual Funding for 211 Press 1 (\$958,440 Annually)			\$ 479,220.00	\$ 718,830.00	\$ 900,000.00	\$ 2,098,050.00
988 SAMHSA Grant (\$1,972,989 ends 4/29/2024)		\$ 1,076,175.82	\$ 896,813.18			\$ 1,972,989.00
FY23 SGF in BHA budget		\$ 5,000,000.00				\$5,000,000.00
SB 241 988 Trust Fund State General Funds			\$ 5,500,000.00			\$ 5,500,000.00
988 ARPA MHBG Funding	\$ 995,400.00	\$ 995,400.00	\$ 995,400.00	\$ 1,002,194.00		\$ 3,988,394.00

\$ 995,400.00	\$ 7,071,575.82	\$ 8,066,975.82	\$ 1,721,024.00	\$ 900,000.00
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\$ 18,559,433.00

988 in Maryland

988 Public Awareness Plan

Strategic Plan Communications to Community Partners

Presentations

- MDH staff have already presented to multiple groups, including local jurisdictions, about Maryland's 988 implementation planning.
- We have provided formal presentations to the Governor's Commission on Suicide Prevention, Health Officers Roundtable, Maryland Association of Behavioral Health Authorities, Cecil County Mental Health Advisory Council, Anne Arundel and Baltimore County Local Behavioral Health Authorities.
- We have additional 988 implementation presentations planned for the coming months.

Strategic Plan Communications to Community Partners (continued)

988 Fact Sheet and Webpages

- 988 Fact Sheet created and distributed to BHA masterlist, including:
 - NAMI
 - Maryland Hospital Association
 - Community Behavioral Health Association of Maryland
 - Mental Health Association of Maryland
 - MedChi
 - NCADD
 - Maryland Association for the Treatment of Opioid Dependence
 - Opioid Operational Command Center (OOCC)
 - and other providers
- [Webpage drafted](#) for BHA and the OOCC's BeforeIt'sTooLate websites

988 Public Awareness Plan

- SAMHSA has provided potential partners with a comprehensive toolkit:

<https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/988/partner-toolkit>



988 Public Awareness Timeline

July 2022:

- MDH press release announcing official launch of 988 in Maryland (July 18)
- Launch BHA and OOCC 988 webpages (July 16)
- Digital and audio promotion of new 988 services
 - Working with Hatcher Group to launch 8 week campaign (July 17—Sept. 16)
 - \$250,000 (part of 211 contract) for digital ad graphics, new radio spot and media buy
- Social media and website promotions from MDH, BHA, OOCC and others

988 Public Awareness Timeline (continued)


August — December 2022

- Distribute RFP or MOU/IA for multi-year awareness campaign
- Work with BHA partners to assess communication gaps; provide social media graphics for use by other state agencies, partners, stakeholders and advocacy groups
- Expand promotions through MDH social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) and BHA's monthly partner and provider communications
- Replace helpline (211p1) with 988 on existing video and digital materials
 - See BHA's inventory of [all campaigns and promotional materials using 211 or 988 messages](#)

2023/24

- Launch video, audio, digital, transit/billboard campaign targeting all audiences through multiple media platforms
- [Office of Communications Messaging Overview](#)

988 Public Awareness — Materials



Coming soon: The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

Maryland will soon have a new way to connect to a local behavioral health crisis call specialist. Calling 988 will connect callers directly to the National Suicide & Crisis Lifeline which can provide assistance with substance use or mental health crises.

The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline replaces the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-8255).

All contacts with 988 (calls, chats, and texts) remain free of charge.

What does this mean for Marylanders?

When someone in Maryland calls 988, the call will be routed based on the caller's area code. For those calls routed to Maryland, the call will be answered by one of the eight strategically-located call centers. These centers provide phone-based support and information regarding local resources.

Maryland has been operating its own crisis hotline (call 211, press 1) which will remain in operation and accessible to Marylanders throughout the transition period and beyond.

When will 988 be implemented?

July 16, 2022 — 988 becomes operational across the nation.

Both 211 press 1 and the existing National Suicide Prevention Lifeline phone number (1-800-273-8255) will remain available. Those experiencing a behavioral health-related or suicidal crisis, or those looking to help a loved one through a crisis, should continue to call 211 and press 1 in Maryland or the Lifeline at its current number (1-800-273-8255) until July 16, 2022.

Fact Sheet, page 1

Who can call 988?

Anyone in need of assistance with behavioral health-related problems.

What can callers expect when they call 988?

Starting July 16, 2022, when calling 988: Callers will hear a greeting message while their call is routed to a Lifeline network crisis call center (based on the caller's area code)

- A trained crisis counselor will answer the phone, listen to the caller, understand how their problem is affecting them, provide support, and provide resources and interventions as needed
- If a Maryland crisis center is unable to take the call, the caller will be automatically routed to a national backup crisis center
- The Lifeline provides live crisis center phone services in English and Spanish and uses Language Line Solutions to provide translation services in over 150 additional languages for people who call 988
- Veterans can access the Veterans Crisis Line by calling 988 and pressing 1


What can someone expect during a chat or text?

- Texts and chats to 988 will also be routed to a Lifeline network crisis call center based on area code.
- A response to chats and texts will be given by a call center staff person

[Learn more about the 988 National Suicide & Crisis Service Lifeline.](#)

Fact Sheet, page 2

988: The New Way to Connect to Behavioral Health Crisis Services



Starting July 16, 2022, Maryland will have a new way to connect to local behavioral health crisis services.

Calling 988 will connect callers directly to the National Suicide & Crisis Lifeline which encompasses **all behavioral crisis services, to include all mental health and substance use (problems with drug and alcohol use).**

The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline replaces the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline AND expands services to cover all behavioral health crisis services.

What does this mean for Marylanders?


When someone in Maryland calls 988, it will be routed to one of the state's **eight call centers**. These centers provide phone-based support and information regarding local resources. Marylanders can also text 988.

Maryland has been operating its own crisis hotline, **211 press 1**, and that number **will remain in operation and accessible to Marylanders throughout the transition period and beyond.**

Who can call 988?

Starting July 16, 2022, anyone in need of assistance with behavioral health related needs can call 988.

The new 988 feature is available nationwide for call (multiple languages), text or chat (English only). Both "211, press 1" and the existing Lifeline phone number (1-800-273-8255) will remain available throughout the transition period and beyond.



988 Webpage

What can you expect when calling 988?

Starting July 16, 2022, when calling 988:

- Callers will hear a greeting message while their call is routed to the Maryland Lifeline network crisis center (based on the caller's area code)
- A trained call specialist will answer the phone, listen to the caller, understand how their problem is affecting them, provide support, and share resources if needed
- If the Maryland crisis center is unable to take the call, the caller will be automatically routed to a national backup crisis center
- The Lifeline provides live crisis center phone services in English and Spanish and uses Language Line Solutions to provide translation services in over 150 additional languages for people who call 988

How does 988 help Marylanders?

988 call specialists located at crisis call centers around Maryland can immediately provide phone-based support and connections to local resources.

By directing cases to 988 when a behavioral health crisis (mental health and substance use) isn't life threatening, the response provided by public services, such as law enforcement and EMS, can be reserved for situations in which lives are endangered.

In 2020, Congress designated the new 988 calling code to be operated through the existing [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#). The [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration \(SAMHSA\)](#) sees 988 as a first step towards a transformed crisis care system in America.

SAMHSA's 988 Resources

- [988: FAQ](#)
- [Veterans Crisis Line Information](#)
- [Find 988 Open Jobs](#)
- [988 Partner Toolkit](#)

988 Webpage

988 Public Awareness — Sample Graphics



988
SUICIDE
& CRISIS
LIFELINE

For mental health, drug and alcohol
use and suicide prevention support.

Call or text 988



For mental health, drug and alcohol
use and suicide prevention support.

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suicidepreventionlifeline.org

