

**HEALTH CARE FOR THE HOMELESS TESTIMONY
IN SUPPORT OF**

Senate Bill 3 – 9-8-8 Trust Fund – Funding

Senate Finance Committee

January 19, 2023



Health Care for the Homeless supports SB 3, which requires \$12 million be allocated to the 988 Trust Fund in support of the 988 Lifeline's suicide prevention and behavioral health crisis services in Maryland.

Health Care for the Homeless sees clients with a range of needs, including clients with behavioral health crisis needs. For those clients, it is critical that we have an accessible system in place that providers and clients alike can rely upon to support their needs.

Congress designated 988 as the new phone number the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. In July 2022, 988 went live, resulting in phone companies routing calls to local crisis call centers that are part of the Lifeline network. The local crisis call centers provide 24/7 free, confidential emotional support to people calling for help. Calls to the Lifeline have significantly increased and are expected to continue to grow.

We believe Maryland must provide funding to ensure the regional call centers have adequate staff, and to ensure crisis response services such as crisis stabilization centers and mobile response teams are available to meet people's needs.

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Everyone deserves to go home.