



**Committee:** House Health and Government Operations Committee

**Bill Number:** Senate Bill 3

**Title:** 9-8-8 Trust Fund - Funding

**Hearing Date:** March 21, 2023

**Position:** Favorable

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The Licensed Clinical Professional Counselors of Maryland (LCPCM) supports *Senate Bill 3 – 988 Trust Fund - Funding*. This bill requires \$12 million in state funding for fiscal 2025.

During the 2022 session, LCPCM was a strong supporter of HB 293 which established the 988 Trust Fund, allowing the program to lay the groundwork for its infrastructure in fiscal 2024. When fully implemented, the 9-8-8 system will allow Marylanders to access crisis services by using an easy-to-remember three-digit number. This system will reduce the burden on the 9-1-1 system and will also more quickly connect people to crisis services instead of more generalized emergency services. In order for the 9-8-8 system to be effective, there will need to be an ongoing commitment to supporting crisis services in the state. With this year's legislation, the 988 system will take another important step forward in developing a robust crisis response system in the state. This trust fund will also help facilitate the state receiving federal funds to support 9-8-8 implementation.

We urge a favorable report on this legislation in order to help modernize our state's emergency petition process. If we can provide any further information, please contact Robyn Elliott at [relliott@policypartners.net](mailto:relliott@policypartners.net).