



Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Ryan Moran, Dr.PH, Acting Secretary

March 4, 2025

The Honorable Pamela Beidle
Chair, Finance Committee
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

RE: Senate Bill (SB) 900 - Maryland Behavioral Health Crisis Response System - Integration of 9-8-8 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline Network and Outcome Evaluations - Letter of Support with Amendments

Dear Chair Beidle and Committee members:

The Maryland Department of Health (the Department) respectfully submits this letter of support with amendments for Senate Bill (SB) 900. The legislation proposes to require each crisis communication center to coordinate with the 9–8–8 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline Network to provide certain support services and requires the Department to annually report on specified data elements on or before December 1 each year.

The Department supports the bill’s goals to ensure coordination with 988, the provision of key services, and the sharing of 988 and crisis system data. The Department has been working with jurisdictions to increase coordination between Maryland 9-8-8 Call/Text/Chat Centers and crisis services. The Department has been sharing 9-8-8 data monthly and working with jurisdictions and providers to improve crisis system data collection, which will begin in State Fiscal Year 2026.

The Department recommends the attached amendments to clarify Maryland vs. national 9-8-8 entities, add that Maryland 988 Call/Text/Chat Centers must coordinate with mobile crisis response and stabilization and other immediate services, and refine law enforcement engagement data elements and the vehicle for consumer experience reporting.

If you would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact Sarah Case-Herron, Director of Governmental Affairs at sarah.case-herron@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

Ryan Moran, DrPH, MHSA
Acting Secretary

In the Senate Finance Committee

AMENDMENT TO SENATE BILL 900

(First Reading File Bill)

On page 1, in lines 4 and 19, in each instance, strike “**CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS CENTER**” and substitute “**MARYLAND 988 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE**”.

On page 2, in line 1, after “the” insert “**NATIONAL**”.

On page 2, in line 3, before “9-8-8” insert “**NATIONAL**”.

On page 2, in line 7, after semicolon insert “**AND**”.

On page 2, insert after line 7, “**5. DIRECT DISPATCH OR WARM HAND-OFFS TO MOBILE CRISIS RESPONSE AND STABILIZATION SERVICES AND OTHER IMMEDIATE SERVICES AS NEEDED.**”.

On page 4, in line 17, after “annual” insert “**CRISIS SERVICES**”.

On page 4, strike in their entirety lines 18 - 21, inclusive and substitute “**INVOLVEMENT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT, INVOLUNTARY STATUS OF CLIENTS, AND DIVERSION FROM HIGHER LEVELS OF CARE INCLUDING HOSPITALS.**”.

On page 4, in line 14, strike “AN annual” and substitute “**ONGOING DATA COLLECTION FROM 988 CALL/TEXT/CHAT AND OTHER CRISIS PROVIDERS,**” and in the same line, strike “survey by the Administration of” and substitute “**INFORMATION WILL BE OBTAINED FROM**”.

On page 4, in line 16, after “System” insert “**AND REPORTED ANNUALLY**”.