

**CalHHS, DHCS, CDPH and EMSA**  
**Proposed Trailer Bill Language: 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline**  
**FACT SHEET**

**SUMMARY:**

**California Health and Human Services Agency (CalHHS):** This proposal authorizes CalHHS to develop recommendations, in consultation with key state entities and stakeholders, as outlined in the CalHHS [AB 988 Five-Year Implementation Plan](#) (named “Building California’s Comprehensive 988-Crisis System: A Strategic Blueprint - AB 988 Five-Year Plan to the State Legislature,” referred as the AB 988 Five-Year Plan, or Plan), and clarify notice requirements among state partners.

**Department of Health Care Services (DHCS):** DHCS proposes to establish a process and standard criteria for entities to apply for approval as designated 988 centers; quality standards 988 centers must meet to maintain designation; and comprehensive oversight and monitoring of designated 988 centers. The TBL also provides DHCS with the authority to oversee the funding of 988 centers, designated 988 centers, and mobile crisis teams for staffing and other costs.

**California Department of Public Health (CDPH):** This proposal authorizes CDPH to oversee statewide 988 public messaging and public health data collection and surveillance related to 988, as described in the CalHHS AB 988 Five-Year Plan.

**California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES):** This proposal requires Cal OES to consult CalHHS and DHCS when determining the 988 surcharge amounts each year and provide a written notice to CalHHS and DHCS of the new surcharge amounts. Furthermore, the proposal requires Cal OES, in consultation with DHCS, to allocate and distribute funds to 988 centers and designated 988 centers for the acquisition of technology and equipment as appropriated by the Legislature.

**Emergency Medical Services Authority (EMSA):** This proposal adds EMSA as a participant in the state 988 advisory group known as the 988-Crisis Policy Advisory Group and provides authority for EMSA to establish statewide training and protocol standards and a quality monitoring program for transfers, medical triage, and response to warm handoff for medical and behavioral health calls.

## **BACKGROUND:**

The National Suicide Hotline Designation Act of 2020 (NSHD) designated 988 as the three-digit number for the national Suicide and Crisis Lifeline. California implemented the 988 Lifeline via the Miles Hall Lifeline and Suicide Prevention Act (Assembly Bill (AB) 988 (Chapter 747, Statutes of 2022)).

The following related proposals request resources to effectuate the recommendations of the Plan: 4260-061-BCP-2026-GB , 0530-012-BCP-2026-MR, and 4120-021-BCP-2026-MR.

## **JUSTIFICATION FOR THE CHANGE:**

Statutory changes are necessary to clarify the responsibilities of departments and effectuate the recommendations included in the Plan.

### **Specifically, the trailer bill language would:**

- Define a “designated 988 center” to mean a center that has applied for and obtained approval from DHCS to operate a designated 988 center on a county or regional basis in California, participate in the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline network to respond to statewide or regional 988 calls, and receive funding from the 988 Suicide and Behavioral Health Crisis Services Fund (proposed GOV Section 53123.1.5(c)).
- Add “designated 988 centers” to the non-exhaustive list of entities providing crisis intervention services in the definition of behavioral health crisis services (GOV Section 53123.1.5(e)).
- Define “mobile crisis team” to mean a multidisciplinary behavioral health provider team that meets the standards and requirements to provide community-based mobile crisis response services under the Medi-Cal program and other requirements as set forth by the State Department of Health Care Services (GOV Section 53123.1.5(i)).
- Add EMSA to the list of the advisory group participants (GOV 53123.3(a)(3)).
- Authorize EMSA to establish statewide training and protocol standards for personnel involved in the transfer of calls between 911 public safety answering points and 988 behavioral health crisis services, medical triage, and response to warm handoff, implement a quality monitoring program, and report on the system’s effectiveness (GOV 53123.3(d)).
- Strike the soon-to-be-obsolete reference to the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) that defines mobile crisis teams and clarify that the revenue generated by the 988 surcharge may be used for state administration expenditures, such as personnel and other related costs (GOV Section 53123.4(b)(1)).
- Clarify that Cal OES, in consultation with CalHHS and DHCS, must make available the funds appropriated by the Legislature and deposited into

the 988 State Suicide and Behavioral Health Crisis Services Fund to support the operation of the 988 system and mobile crisis teams (GOV Section 53123.4(c)).

- Specify that Cal OES must provide DHCS with sufficient funds, as determined by DHCS and subject to an appropriation by the Legislature, to ensure the operation of the 988 centers, designated 988 centers, and mobile crisis teams (GOV Section 53123.4(c)(1)).
- Specify that DHCS must allocate and distribute the funds for the purposes of staffing and other costs as specified by DHCS (GOV Section 53123.4(c)(2)).
- Specify that Cal OES, in consultation with DHCS, must allocate and distribute funds to the 988 centers and designated 988 centers for the acquisition of technology and equipment (GOV Section 53123.4(c)(3)).
- Require Cal OES, in consultation with DHCS, to review and either approve or deny the annual expenditure and outcomes report (GOV Section 53123.4(f)).
- Require Cal OES, in consultation with DHCS, to provide technical assistance to the entity to correct and resubmit the report for approval if the entity's annual expenditure and outcomes report is not approved (GOV Section 53123.4(g)).
- Authorize CalHHS, in consultation with other state entities and community partners, to develop recommendations for a system of funding the operation of mobile crisis teams, subject to appropriation (GOV Section 53123.4(h)).
- Require DHCS to establish a framework for entities to apply for 988 center designation no sooner than October 1, 2027 (GOV Section 53123.7(b)).
- Require existing 988 centers to obtain approval as a designated 988 center from DHCS by December 31, 2029 (GOV Section 53123.7(c)).
- Clarify that a 988 center may receive funds through the 988 Suicide and Behavioral Health Crisis Services Fund until December 31, 2029, and on January 1, 2030, and ongoing, only a designated 988 center may receive funds (GOV Section 53123.7(d)).
- Require DHCS to establish standards no sooner than October 1, 2027, to ensure designated 988 centers provide quality services. (GOV Section 53123.7(e)).
- Require DHCS to establish standards for the oversight and monitoring of designated 988 centers no sooner than October 1, 2027 (GOV Section 53123.7(f)).
- Require a designated 988 center to furnish all information, records, and documentation requested by DHCS to review compliance within 15 calendar days from the day of the request unless DHCS grants the center an extension (GOV Section 53123.7(g)).

- Authorize DHCS to conduct performance and compliance audits of designated 988 centers (GOV Section 53123.7(h)).
- Allow DHCS to require a designated 988 center to take specified actions to correct any noncompliance with state law or DHCS guidance (GOV Section 53123.7(i)).
- Authorize DHCS to suspend or revoke any designation issued to operate a designated 988 center or deny an application for designation (GOV Section 53123.7(j)).
- Clarify that a designated 988 center that has had its designation revoked or suspended cannot receive funds through the 988 Suicide and Behavioral Health Crisis Services Fund or resume operations until its designation is reinstated, or in the case of revocation, it applies for and receives approval for a new designation (GOV Section 53123.7(k)).
- Require DHCS to post on its website a list of all 988 centers, along with any corrective action plans, suspensions, or revocations imposed beginning on January 1, 2028 (GOV Section 53123.7(l)).
- Authorize CDPH, in consultation with DHCS, to implement statewide public awareness strategies to increase public awareness and trust in the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline and associated services and conduct statewide evaluation of communication strategies implemented to increase public awareness of 988 (HSC Section 131325).
- Specify Cal OES provides the summary of the calculation of the proposed surcharge available to relevant departments, including DHCS (RTC Section 41030(g)(1)).
- Require Cal OES to provide a written notice to CalHHS and DHCS of the new surcharge amounts at least 30 days prior to October 1 each year (RTC Section 41031).
- Clarify that the remainder of the revenue in the 988 Suicide and Behavioral Health Crisis Services Fund shall be disbursed to DHCS in addition to Cal OES (RTC Section 41136).

**Summary of Arguments in Support:**

- Establishes clear authority for DHCS to work with Cal OES on maintaining sufficient funds for the operation of the 988 centers, designated 988 centers, and mobile crisis teams.
- Provides that the 988 centers and designated 988 centers are provided with funds for the acquisition of technology and equipment to support the technical operations of the centers.
- Aligns statute with the recommendations in the five-year implementation plan.
- Establishes a statewide framework for designation and oversight of 988 centers to increase accountability and compliance.
- Increases transparency in the annual process of determining the surcharge amounts.
- Clarifies roles among the state entities responsible for implementing a comprehensive 988 crisis system.