

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 2533 Session of 2024

INTRODUCED BY PROBST, KHAN, HILL-EVANS, SANCHEZ, CEPEDA-FREYTIZ, BOROWSKI, HADDOCK, MADDEN, GALLAGHER, DALEY, WEBSTER, FREEMAN, KENYATTA, ROZZI, GIRAL, McANDREW, STEELE, GREEN AND WARREN, AUGUST 12, 2024

AS AMENDED ON SECOND CONSIDERATION, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, OCTOBER 9, 2024

AN ACT

1 Amending Title 35 (Health and Safety) of the Pennsylvania
2 Consolidated Statutes, providing for mental health crisis
3 response and for evaluation and report; and imposing duties
4 on the Department of Human Services.

5 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
6 hereby enacts as follows:

7 Section 1. Title 35 of the Pennsylvania Consolidated
8 Statutes is amended by adding a chapter to read:

CHAPTER 53A

MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS RESPONSE

11 Sec.

12 53A01. Definitions.

13 53A02. 988 public education campaign.

14 53A03. Evaluation and report.

15 § 53A01. Definitions.

16 The following words and phrases when used in this chapter

17 shall have the meanings given to them in this section unless the

1 context clearly indicates otherwise:

2 "911 system." As defined in section 5302 (relating to
3 definitions).

4 "988 crisis call center." A call center designated by the
5 Commonwealth to respond to Statewide or regional calls from the
6 988 suicide and crisis lifeline.

7 "988 suicide and crisis lifeline." The universal telephone
8 number within the United States designated for the purpose of
9 the national suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline
10 system operating through the National Suicide Prevention
11 Lifeline program in accordance with 42 U.S.C. § 290bb-36c
12 (relating to National Suicide Prevention Lifeline program).

13 "Campaign." The 988 public education campaign described
14 under section 53A02 (relating to 988 public education campaign).

15 "Department." The Department of Human Services of the
16 Commonwealth.

17 "EMERGENCY RESPONDER." ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:

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18 (1) A CURRENT OR FORMER CERTIFIED EMERGENCY MEDICAL
19 SERVICES PROVIDER OR CURRENT OR FORMER MEMBER OF AN EMERGENCY
20 MEDICAL SERVICES AGENCY, FIRE COMPANY OR RESCUE COMPANY.

21 (2) A PEACE OFFICER.

22 (3) A 911 DISPATCHER.

23 (4) A CORONER OR MEDICAL EXAMINER WHO RESPONDS IN AN
24 OFFICIAL CAPACITY TO AN EMERGENCY.

25 (5) A CORRECTIONS OFFICER.

26 § 53A02. 988 public education campaign.

27 (a) Implementation.--No later than 180 days after the
28 effective date of this subsection, the department shall
29 implement a campaign to increase public understanding and
30 engagement with the 988 suicide and crisis lifeline in this

1 Commonwealth to:

2 (1) Promote awareness of 988 services and other local
3 helplines and resources to support individuals during a
4 mental health crisis.

5 (2) Encourage the appropriate use of the 988 suicide and
6 crisis lifeline as an alternative to the 911 system.

7 (3) Provide information about suicide prevention
8 measures and the warning signs of suicide.

9 (b) Consultation.--To administer the campaign and ensure
10 that the messages of the campaign are effectively tailored, the
11 department shall consult with the following:

12 (1) The Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs.

13 (2) 988 crisis call centers in this Commonwealth.

14 (3) Advocacy groups focused on suicide prevention,
15 including organizations that address the unique challenges of
16 suicide prevention in both rural and urban environments,
17 PROVIDE SERVICES AND SUPPORT TO VETERANS AND EMERGENCY <--
18 RESPONDERS and ~~groups that~~ provide services and support to <--
19 non-English speakers.

20 (4) Crisis counselors and other mental health
21 professionals specializing in suicide prevention.

22 (5) Individuals with lived experiences of mental health
23 or substance use crisis.

24 (c) Materials and resources.--

25 (1) To administer the campaign, the department:

26 (i) Shall utilize a variety of materials and
27 resources, including print media, social media graphics,
28 posters and displays, which shall be:

29 (A) Posted on the publicly accessible Internet
30 website of the department.

1 (B) Designed to be mobile-friendly.

2 (C) Available in multiple languages, as deemed
3 necessary by the department.

4 (D) Designed to ensure effective communication
5 with the diverse populations and cultures across this
6 Commonwealth.

7 (ii) May utilize existing materials and resources,
8 including 988-related materials and resources developed
9 by the United States Substance Abuse and Mental Health
10 Services Administration.

11 (2) All materials and resources that are produced by the
12 department for the campaign must comply with the act of
13 December 20, 2015 (P.L.497, No.90), known as the Taxpayer-
14 Funded Advertising Transparency Act.

15 § 53A03. Evaluation and report.

16 (a) Initial report.--Within 180 days of the effective date
17 of this subsection, the department shall submit a report to the
18 chairperson and minority chairperson of the Health and Human
19 Services Committee of the Senate and the chairperson and
20 minority chairperson of the Human Services Committee of the
21 House of Representatives. The department shall ensure that the
22 report, at a minimum, includes all of the following:

23 (1) A comprehensive review of the department's efforts
24 to raise awareness of the 988 suicide and crisis lifeline,
25 detailing activities, key metrics utilized and budget
26 allocations and expenditures.

27 (2) A performance summary, including call volume data
28 and the usage of the 988 suicide and crisis lifeline chat and
29 text functions, key findings, recommendations and any
30 preliminary or final reports generated from efforts to raise

1 awareness of the 988 suicide and crisis lifeline.

2 (3) Information on 988 suicide and crisis lifeline
3 operations, including a breakdown of calls received, in-State
4 answer rates, services provided to callers and the percentage
5 of calls requiring crisis intervention.

6 (4) Insights or recommendations from the consultations
7 specified under section 53A02(b) (relating to 988 public
8 education campaign).

9 (5) A summary of ongoing or planned initiatives to
10 further promote awareness of the 988 suicide and crisis
11 lifeline.

12 (b) Updated report.--Within one year of the submission of
13 the report under subsection (a), the department shall submit an
14 updated report to the chairperson and minority chairperson of
15 the Health and Human Services Committee of the Senate and the
16 chairperson and minority chairperson of the Human Services
17 Committee of the House of Representatives. The department shall
18 ensure that the updated report includes all of the following:

19 (1) Updated statistics on 988 suicide and crisis
20 lifeline operations.

21 (2) Information on new campaigns or initiatives to raise
22 awareness of the 988 suicide and crisis lifeline, including
23 metrics, target audiences and performance evaluations.

24 (3) The impact of the new campaigns or initiatives under
25 paragraph (2) on the utilization of the 988 suicide and
26 crisis lifeline, including the in-State answer rate, call
27 volume and the number of Pennsylvanians receiving services or
28 referrals.

29 Section 2. This act shall take effect immediately.