



# California 988–Crisis Policy Advisory Group Quarterly Update

April through June 2024

The California Health and Human Services Agency (CalHHS) and its partners' efforts to draft recommendations for a comprehensive 988 system for all Californians is now in full swing. As stipulated by the Miles Hall Lifeline and Suicide Prevention Act (AB 988), the effort will result in the submission of a five-year implementation plan to the California State Legislature in December 2024. Key to the plan's development are facilitated meetings of the 988–Crisis Policy Advisory Group (PAG); a series of focused discussions with workgroups charged with developing recommendations for the PAG to consider; and a community engagement process designed to gather input from individuals and families with lived experience in the behavioral health system, with particular focus on historically marginalized communities.

This update summarizes salient activities and accomplishments from April to June 2024 and briefly describes key areas of focus ahead.



## Meetings of the 988–Crisis Policy Advisory Group

The 988–Crisis Policy Advisory Group met on April 24 and June 26, 2024, to discuss recommendations emerging from several different workgroups: Statewide 988 Standards and Guidance (Workgroup 2), 988–911 Behavioral Health Crisis Care Continuum Integration



*Policy Advisory Group members gathered at the Allenby Building in Sacramento on April 24, 2024*

(Workgroup 3), and Communications (Workgroup 4). Workgroup co-chairs, who also serve as members of the PAG, presented the recommendations along with insights and key discussion topics.

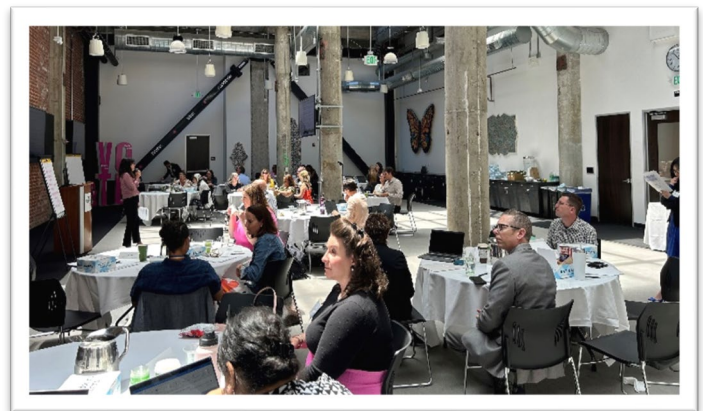
**The April 24<sup>th</sup> PAG meeting** included a review and discussion of some preliminary findings from the comprehensive assessment, including population level data on suicide rates and behavioral health related mortality and emergency department utilization as well as an overview of current services in California that prevent, respond to, and stabilize crisis.

The meeting provided PAG members an opportunity to discuss draft recommendations on statewide 988 standards and guidance. Discussion also focused on key opportunities and challenges related to integrating 988 with other behavioral health services, including mobile crisis units and services that stabilize crisis. The summary of the April meeting can be found [here](#), along with [presentation materials](#) and a [recording](#).

**The June 26<sup>th</sup> PAG meeting** showcased a draft framework for how goals and recommendations in the 5-year plan will be organized. The meeting provided a chance for PAG

members to weigh in and brainstorm on meaningful and practical mechanisms to monitor the crisis system's performance over the next five years. The meeting also provided PAG members an opportunity to provide feedback on draft recommendations related to informing Californians about 988 and building trust in the behavioral health crisis system. The summary of the June meeting can be found [here](#), along with [presentation materials](#) and a [recording](#).

Three additional meetings of the PAG are planned in the upcoming months: August 14<sup>th</sup>, September 18<sup>th</sup>, and November 20<sup>th</sup>; all are open to the public.



*Policy Advisory Group Meeting at the California Endowment in Sacramento on June 26, 2024*



## 988-Crisis Workgroups

The six 988-Crisis Workgroups responsible for supporting the development of the required recommendation areas of AB 988 legislation met at least once between April and June. An additional Workgroup centered on the role of peers in the crisis continuum also launched along with a series of facilitated focus group discussions with individuals impacted by the behavioral health crisis system and different populations of focus, including Urban Indian and Tribal communities. The following briefly summarizes key topics and next steps.

<b>Workgroup #1: Comprehensive Assessment of Behavioral Health Crisis Services</b>	<b>Meeting Dates</b>
<a href="#">Summary</a> , <a href="#">Presentation</a> , <a href="#">Video</a>	April 11, 2024

The Workgroup sought input from members on behavioral health crisis services specific to young adults and older adults populations, which have historically experienced higher rates of suicide than other age groups. The Workgroup also discussed available needs and services for the LGBTQIA+ community, veterans and rural communities, including resources to promote wellness and address stigma. This represented the final meeting (4 of 4) of Workgroup #1, with key findings shared during the April 24<sup>th</sup> PAG Meeting.

<b>Workgroup #2: Statewide 988 Standards and Guidance</b>	<b>Meeting Dates</b>
<a href="#">Summary</a> , <a href="#">Presentation</a> , <a href="#">Video</a>	April 9

The Workgroup discussed needed skills, competencies, and training to support 988 help seekers with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), physical health, and non-crisis mental health needs. Workgroup members encouraged the state to build on existing best practices and research and to engage those with lived experience to inform ongoing implementation. Workgroup members noted that 988 crisis counselors should have basic knowledge of mental health, substance use, physical health, IDDs, and other conditions alongside access points to more specialized resources. This was the final meeting (4 of 4) of Workgroup #2 with draft

recommendations brought forward and discussed during the April 24 PAG Meeting.

<b>Workgroup #3: Integration</b>	<b>Meeting Dates</b>
<a href="#">Summary</a> , <a href="#">Presentation</a> , <a href="#">Video</a>	April 12
<i>Upcoming</i>	July 30

The Workgroup discussed the goal of de-escalation and stabilization and underscored the need for defined thresholds for in-person response and greater coordination across the continuum. The group recognized the work that the California Office of Emergency Services' (CalOES) [Technical Advisory Board](#) has done to establish the technical infrastructure to enable transfers and interoperability and to develop draft guidance for 911-988 handoff, including protocols for both first-person (individual seeking support) and third person (friend, family or individual seeking support on behalf of someone). The Workgroup will convene a final time in July (meeting 5 of 5) to gather additional feedback on CalOES's draft 911-988 transfer protocol with plans for additional discussion on coordination and integration of 988 at upcoming August 14<sup>th</sup> PAG meeting.

<b>Workgroup #4: Communications</b>	<b>Meeting Dates</b>
<a href="#">Summary</a> , <a href="#">Presentation</a> , <a href="#">Video</a>	May 23
<a href="#">Summary</a> , <a href="#">Presentation</a> , <a href="#">Video</a>	June 13

The Workgroup met twice to review research related to population-based 988 messaging, learn from the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) about best practices in public health campaigns, and from the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) on its plans to promote 988 over the next three years. The Workgroup discussed shared principles for raising the public's awareness of 988 including ensuring transparency of what to expect when calling 988 and emphasizing both confidentiality and privacy. The Workgroup members also discussed the importance of developing targeted messaging for different populations and communities, including words and images that can normalize help-seeking, and testimonials from those who have sought support. The June 13<sup>th</sup> meeting was the final meeting (2 of 2) of Workgroup #4 with draft

recommendations brought forward and discussed during the June 26 PAG Meeting.

<b>Workgroup #5: Data and Metrics</b>	<b>Meeting Dates</b>
<a href="#">Summary</a> , <a href="#">Presentation</a> , <a href="#">Video</a>	May 17
<i>Upcoming</i>	<i>July 31</i>

The Workgroup launched in May to develop recommendations on how to measure 988 system performance, including capacity, wait time, and the ability to meet demand for services. Using the Results Based Accountability framework, the Workgroup addressed the need to establish quantifiable goals that would track both outcomes for the populations served, as well as measure the overall efficiency of the 988 crisis care continuum system. Examples of the measurements considered by the group included call volume, length of call time, how calls are responded to, connections to services, and increased public awareness of 988. Initial data gathered at the May launch meeting were discussed further as part of the June 26<sup>th</sup> Policy Advisory Group. The Workgroup will meet a final time on July 31<sup>st</sup> with additional discussions on goals and metrics during the August and September PAG meetings.

<b>Workgroup #6: Funding and Sustainability</b>	<b>Meeting Dates</b>
<a href="#">Summary</a> , <a href="#">Presentation</a> , <a href="#">Video</a>	May 30
<i>Upcoming</i>	<i>July 29</i>
<i>Upcoming</i>	<i>August 27</i>

The Workgroup reviewed AB 988 legislation and related United States government legislative code that describe the use of 988 surcharge dollars. Workgroup members provided insights and ideas on how funds might be used to ensure an effective, equitable, and accessible crisis response system, including criteria to receive funds. The Workgroup also discussed the importance of addressing billing challenges with Medi-Cal and commercial insurers and discussed how 988 Crisis Centers are currently funded (e.g., flat fee vs fee for services). The Workgroup will meet two more times: once in July for a discussion focused on the 988 fund; and a second meeting in September focused on insurance parity.

<b>Peer Supporters Workgroup</b>	<b>Meeting Dates</b>
<a href="#">Summary</a> , <a href="#">Presentation</a> , <a href="#">Video</a>	June 11
Peer Supporters	August 6

In addition to the six Workgroups established to support the fourteen required areas of AB 988, CalHHS convened a Peer Supporters Workgroup. The Workgroup focused on the important role that the peer workforce currently plays in crisis services and what role it could play in the future. Members were identified based on recommendations from the 988-Crisis PAG, with the Workgroup focused on exploring peer workforce-specific implementation considerations across the crisis care continuum. During the group’s inaugural meeting, Workgroup members discussed the scope of peer support services and the settings where services are offered, how peer support services in the crisis continuum differ from other types of peer support roles, and how to integrate peer supporters within multi-disciplinary teams. Input from the Workgroup will help to inform the PAG’s recommendations and will be included as part of a report out to the PAG in August.



### **Your Voice Matters**

Members of the public are encouraged to join future PAG and Workgroup meetings and are invited to make a public comment by attending or sending comments to [AB988info@chhs.ca.gov](mailto:AB988info@chhs.ca.gov). Meeting information and recordings are posted to the [988-Crisis Policy Advisory Group landing page](#), along with the list of Policy Advisory Group members, and other relevant information.

## Resource Summary



[988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline Site](#) and [988-Crisis Policy Advisory Group Site](#)



[CalHHS Behavioral Health Crisis Care Continuum Plan](#), May 2023.



[AB988 Legislation in Legislative Code](#)



[California Office of Emergency Services \(CalOES\) Technical Advisory Board](#)



For more information or to be added to the AB988 Mailing List, please email [AB988Info@chhs.ca.gov](mailto:AB988Info@chhs.ca.gov).

# CalHHS AB 988: Key Project Milestones

