
SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Sabrina Cervantes, Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular Session

AB 2093 (Bauer-Kahan) - State 988 system

Version: June 11, 2026

Urgency: No

Hearing Date: August 3, 2026

Policy Vote: HEALTH 11 - 0, E.M. 8 - 0

Mandate: No

Consultant: Agnes Lee

Bill Summary: AB 2093 would make changes regarding the state's 988 system.

Fiscal Impact:

- The California Health and Human Services Agency (CalHHS) estimates the following:
 - General Fund costs of \$500,000 to \$700,000 annually for fiscal years 2027-28, 2028-29, and 2029-30 for enhanced reporting requirements.
 - One-time General Fund consulting costs of \$1 million for advisory group facilitation and technical support for fiscal years 2027-28 and 2028-29.
 - Ongoing General Fund costs of \$600,000 starting in fiscal year 2029-30 for staffing resources to serve as policy and technical lead for the statewide governance group.
- The Emergency Medical Services Authority (EMSA) estimates annual costs of \$203,000 (988 State Suicide and Behavioral Health Crisis Services Fund) for state administration. Because EMSA currently has a three-year limited-term position to administer related 988 initiatives, the bill would not result in additional costs during this limited-term period.
- The California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) estimates that establishing and maintaining the statewide interoperability platform would require approximately \$2 million in initial implementation costs and approximately \$2 million in ongoing annual costs (988 State Suicide and Behavioral Health Crisis Services Fund).
- Unknown ongoing costs, potentially hundreds of thousands, for the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) for state administration (988 State Suicide and Behavioral Health Crisis Services Fund).

Background: Current law establishes the Miles Hall Lifeline and Suicide Prevention Act and "988," which is the three-digit telephone number designated by the Federal Communications Commission for the purpose of connecting individuals experiencing a behavioral health crisis with the national suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline system. Cal OES is responsible for verifying interoperability between and across 911 and 988.

Current law requires the CalHHS to create a set of recommendations to support the five-year implementation plan for the 988 hotline, convene a state 988 advisory group for purposes of advising CalHHS on the set of recommendations to support the five-year implementation plan, and post regular updates on the CalHHS website regarding the implementation of 988 until December 31, 2029.

The 988 State Suicide and Behavioral Health Crisis Services Fund consists of revenue generated by a 988 surcharge on telephone access lines to be used solely for the operations of the 988 center and mobile crisis teams, as defined. The fund also consists of any other appropriations made to it by the Legislature. The Legislature may consider additional uses for the revenue generated by the 988 surcharge based on recommendations made by the CalHHS and the advisory group. Current law authorizes Cal OES, in consultation with the DHCS, to adopt regulations regarding how 988 funds received must be disseminated to support the operations of the 988 system and related behavioral health crisis services.

Proposed Law: Specific provisions of the bill would:

- Require Cal OES, on or before December 31, 2029, in consultation with the DHCS to procure, implement, and designate a single statewide interoperability platform capable of facilitating real-time communication and warm handoffs between 988 centers and 911 public safety answering points; and require that Cal OES retain responsibility for technical interoperability between 988 and 911 systems, including telecommunications coordination and related technology functions.
- Require EMSA, in consultation with Cal OES and the DHCS, to develop and adopt mandatory statewide protocols governing the transfer of calls and communications from 911 public safety answering points to 988 centers, as specified.
- Add requirements regarding the content of CalHHS updates.
- Require that the CalHHS have the primary responsibility for statewide governance and implementation of the 988 system; and require the agency to maintain a 988 System Governance Board to provide cross-agency coordination and oversight related to implementation of the 988 system, as specified.
- Require the DHCS to be responsible for all of the following:
 - Oversight of 988 center operations.
 - Oversight of mobile crisis integration into the 988 system.
 - Administration of the 988 State Suicide and Behavioral Health Crisis Services Fund, except for technical interoperability functions retained by Cal OES.
 - Development of statewide operational, workforce, training, technology, and funding methodologies necessary to implement the 988 system.
 - Establishment of statewide requirements, implementation standards, and protocols necessary to support integration between 988 centers and mobile

crisis teams, including real-time coordination, warm handoff capability, and response protocols.

- Establishment of statewide standards and protocols to support least restrictive and clinically appropriate responses to behavioral health crises, including behavioral health or medical responses in lieu of law enforcement response whenever clinically appropriate.
- Require, no later than December 31, 2029, and to the extent not prohibited by federal law, Medi-Cal mobile crisis service providers to maintain the capability to receive and respond to referrals, dispatch requests, or warm handoffs from 988 centers in real time.
- Require DHCS to develop and maintain a statewide three-year expenditure methodology for the 988 State Suicide and Behavioral Health Crisis Services Fund, as specified.
- Authorize the DHCS, instead of Cal OES, to adopt regulations regarding how 988 funds received must be disseminated to support the operations of the 988 system and related behavioral health crisis services.

Related Legislation: AB 1540 (Mark González) would include provisions regarding an adequate specialized LGBTQ+ suicide prevention hotline under the 988 system. The bill is scheduled to be heard August 3, 2026 in this committee.

Staff Comments: The Budget Act of 2026 included a one-time augmentation of \$203,000 (988 State Suicide and Behavioral Health Crisis Services Fund) in 2026-27 for EMSA to support statewide guidance on behavioral health crisis response for local emergency medical services agencies.

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