
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 252 Session of 2023

INTRODUCED BY MADDEN, PROBST, BRENNAN, HILL-EVANS, BOROWSKI, SANCHEZ, OTTEN, FRANKEL, SAPPEY, WEBSTER, SCOTT, DALEY, TAKAC, VENKAT, ROZZI, T. DAVIS, KINSEY, BURGOS, KINKEAD AND BOYD, OCTOBER 27, 2023

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES, OCTOBER 27, 2023

A RESOLUTION

1 Directing the Joint State Government Commission to establish the
2 911/988 Technical Advisory Board and conduct a study and
3 issue recommendations on interoperability between and across
4 911 and 988.

5 WHEREAS, The traditional emergency response system 911 is not
6 always adequately equipped to handle mental health crises
7 leading to unfortunate outcomes that can result in harm to
8 individuals in need of mental health support; and

9 WHEREAS, A person experiencing a mental health crisis is more
10 likely to encounter law enforcement than to receive treatment or
11 crisis intervention; and

12 WHEREAS, The House of Representatives recognizes that
13 historically crisis response services placed marginalized
14 communities at a disproportionate risk of poor outcomes and
15 criminal justice involvement; and

16 WHEREAS, The establishment of 988 as a dedicated number for
17 mental health crises is a significant step toward improving
18 access to critical mental health services and reducing the

1 stigma associated with seeking help; and

2 WHEREAS, Mobile crisis units have been proven to be an
3 effective means of deescalating crises, connecting individuals
4 with appropriate mental health services and reducing unnecessary
5 incarceration or hospitalization; and

6 WHEREAS, 911 has long served as the primary emergency number
7 for accessing assistance in situations involving life-
8 threatening emergencies, including medical, fire and law
9 enforcement emergencies; and

10 WHEREAS, The integration and coordination of services between
11 911 and 988 is essential to ensure a comprehensive and effective
12 response to emergencies that involve mental health crises,
13 particularly in situations where both types of crises may
14 intersect; and

15 WHEREAS, It is incumbent upon state governments to explore
16 and establish mechanisms for the seamless integration of 911 and
17 988 services to ensure the safety and well-being of their
18 residents; and

19 WHEREAS, A Joint State Government Commission study would be a
20 valuable and comprehensive approach to assess the potential
21 challenges, benefits and necessary steps for integrating 911 and
22 988 services within this Commonwealth; therefore be it

23 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives direct the Joint
24 State Government Commission to establish the 911/988 Technical
25 Advisory Board consisting of, but not limited to, the following
26 individuals to conduct a study and provide recommendations on
27 the interoperability between and across 911 and 988:

28 (1) The Speaker of the House of Representatives or a
29 designee.

30 (2) The Minority Leader of the House of Representatives

1 or a designee.

2 (3) The Deputy Secretary of the Office of Mental Health
3 and Substance Abuse Services of the Department of Human
4 Services or a designee.

5 (4) The Deputy Adjutant General of the Department of
6 Military and Veterans Affairs or a designee.

7 (5) The Insurance Commissioner or a designee.

8 (6) A representative from the Commonwealth Office of
9 Digital Experience.

10 (7) A representative from the Department of Drug and
11 Alcohol Programs.

12 (8) A representative from the Behavioral Health Council.

13 (9) At least two representatives from the 911 Advisory
14 Board.

15 (10) A representative from the Pennsylvania State
16 Police.

17 (11) Representatives from other Commonwealth agencies or
18 entities that the Joint State Government Commission deems
19 appropriate.

20 (12) The coordinator of a city of the first class.

21 (13) The coordinator of a county of the second class.

22 (14) The coordinator of a county of the second class A.

23 (15) The coordinator of a county of the third or fourth
24 class.

25 (16) Two coordinators of a county of the fifth, sixth,
26 seventh or eighth class.

27 (17) A representative of employees working for county
28 behavioral health agencies and agencies who subcontract with
29 county behavioral health agencies.

30 (18) A representative from an organization advocating

1 for:

2 (i) Individuals who have experienced homelessness.

3 (ii) Individuals of local immigrant communities.

4 (iii) Individuals from the LGBTQ+ community.

5 (iv) Individuals who have an intellectual disability
6 or are on the Autism spectrum.

7 (v) Individuals who are of racial or ethnic
8 minorities.

9 (vi) Equal opportunity for people with disabilities.

10 (vii) Individuals with substance use disorder or
11 substance misuse.

12 (19) A representative from the emergency medical
13 services field.

14 (20) A representative from a behavioral health managed
15 care organization;

16 and be it further

17 RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission, in
18 consultation with the 911/988 Technical Advisory Board, shall
19 compile a report that, at a minimum, includes all of the
20 following:

21 (1) Recommendations for innovation technology for the
22 operation of 911 and 988.

23 (2) 911 and 988 infrastructure, staffing and training
24 standards that ensure Statewide access to crisis counselors
25 through telephone calls, texts and chat, 24 hours per day,
26 seven days per week.

27 (3) The appropriate training to support 911 personnel
28 staff when coordinating with 988 staff.

29 (4) Strategies for identifying and supporting investment
30 in new technology to triage calls and link individuals to

1 follow-up care.

2 (5) Protocols to support the effective communication and
3 coordination of responders, law enforcement and fire and
4 ambulance services during a behavioral health crisis.

5 (6) Appropriate actions to consider when a suicidal or
6 behavioral health crisis is routed to 988 as an alternative
7 to law enforcement.

8 (7) Protocols to divert calls from the 911 dispatch and
9 response system to a 988 crisis call center for risk
10 assessment and engagement, including assessment for mobile
11 crisis or community care team dispatch.

12 (8) Protocols to provide for equity in behavioral health
13 crisis treatment that provide for culturally, linguistically
14 and developmentally appropriate responses to individuals
15 experiencing behavioral health crises in recognition that,
16 historically, crisis response services placed marginalized
17 communities at disproportionate risk of poor outcomes and
18 criminal justice involvement.

19 (9) Training on providing linguistically and culturally
20 competent care and follow-up services to individuals routed
21 to the 988 suicide prevention and behavioral health crisis
22 hotline consistent with guidance and policies established by
23 the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline;

24 and be it further

25 RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission
26 establish the 911/988 Technical Advisory Board within three
27 months of the adoption of this resolution; and be it further

28 RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission issue
29 the report with its finding to the chair and minority chair of
30 the Human Services Committee of the House of Representatives

1 within 180 days of the adoption of this resolution.