

MEMORANDUM

TO: Representative Lori Houghton, Chair, House Committee on Health Care

FROM: Emily Hawes, Commissioner, Department of Mental Health

DATE: March 13, 2023

RE: Testimony Attachment Providing an Overview of 988 Funding

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1. *The Committee received a letter from Heather White of AFSP Vermont stating the below:
“The 988 Suicide Prevention and Crisis Lifeline currently is funded from two sources: (1) \$250,000 is covered by a SAMHSA grant which terminates on April 29, 2024, and (2) private funding, which covers costs above the SAMHSA granted amount. Funding sources are set to expire in the middle of 2024. This means at the end of FY24 there will be no funding to support the new 988 Suicide Prevention line”.*

This is incomplete information and could be a result of when the letter was written.

Funds for Lifeline Centers for FY24 - we have \$440,000 in the state budget with another \$275,000 requested. We have received additional funds from SAMHSA which brings the total SAMHSA funds available to centers is \$521,076.

2. *Who receives funding associated with the 988-crisis line - both grants and state appropriations? The majority of funds are received by the 988 Lifeline centers for operations (NCSS, NKHS, and Headrest).*
3. *What each entity's responsibilities are for the 988-crisis line and the associated costs - operations and marketing?*
The Lifeline Centers are responsible for operations. The State is responsible for marketing and technical assistance.
4. *What is the total cost to operate the 988-crisis line 24/7 -*
For FY24, the total cost is estimated to be \$1,146,613.
5. *Who received the SAMHSA grant and how has the money been used? Will we need to replace with state dollars after April 2024?*
The Department of Mental Health received the SAMHSA grant and all funds are allocated for use from 4/2023-4/2024. We may need to replace the portion of the funds allocated to the centers. This could be up to \$521,076 based on the assessment of need following work performed in the grant.
6. *What is the private funding used for? Will we need to replace with state dollars?*
Private funding (\$142,000) was awarded to the centers directly for one-time costs not covered by the state or federal grants. We do not need to replace with state dollars.



7. *What agencies does DMH contract with to support the 988-crisis line?*
Northwestern Counseling and Support Services, Northeast Kingdom Human Services, Headrest

8. *At the end of the day - how much state money will be needed in FY2025 to fully fund the 988-crisis line?*
The total cost is estimated to be \$1,146,613, assuming similar response needs. If the usage of 988 increases, the cost to fund may increase as well. See response #9 (below) for projections.

9. 988 Budget for FY24 (Operations at Center Level)
July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024

Lifeline Center	Coverage	Budget
NCSS	63 hours of call response 40 hours of chat and text response Follow-up Calls	\$333,374
NKHS	105 hours of call response 128 hours of chat and text response Follow-up Calls	\$793,239
Headrest	24/7 Backup Follow-up Calls	\$20,000
Total	24/ 7 response to all contacts Follow-up calls 24/7 backup	\$1,146,613 \$95,551 per month

FY24 Lifeline operations will include a combined 24/7 call, chat and text response, follow-up calls as appropriate, and 24/7 backup coverage (Headrest).

Current Fund Sources available for Operations:

SAMHSA Cooperative Agreement (7/2023-4/2024): \$485,660
To Be Determined (Gov Budget Request): \$715,200
 Total: **\$1,200,860**

Justification:

Core Area 2 of Vermont’s 988 Implementation Plan relates to securing adequate, diversified, and Sustained Funding Streams for the Lifeline Member Centers. Within this area, the 988 Planning Coalition identified possible sustainable funding streams being examined now include a telecom fee, Medicaid reimbursements, Mental Health Block Grant Funds, state budget allocation to the Department of Mental Health, and donations from private foundations.

From the 988 Implementation Plan

Projected Costs for Year 1: According to the 988 Cost Projection Report released by Vibrant, when utilizing the Centralized model, the projected costs for Year 1 (7/1/2022-6/30/2023) are \$2,907,060, and total volume projections are at 10,500 annually. The following table shows the projected costs versus the estimated costs based on current call volume, assuming a 30% increase*:



<u>Vibrant Projections</u>				<u>Vermont Actual Volume (+30%)</u>			
	Volume	Cost per Contact	Totals		Volume	Cost per Contact	Totals
Calls	6,000	222.8	\$ 1,336,800	Calls	4,680	222.8	\$ 1,042,704
Follow-up	300	139.25	\$ 41,775	Follow-up	234	139.25	\$ 32,585
Chat	4,000	371.33	\$ 1,485,320	Chat	601	371.33	\$ 223,021
Text	200	208.87	\$ 41,774	Text	156	208.87	\$ 32,584
Total Projected Costs			\$ 2,907,060	Total Actual Costs (est)			\$ 1,330,893

*August 2021 to August 2022 reports an 80% increase in calls answered.

