An act relating to the Coordinated Mental Health Crisis Response Working Group

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

Sec. 1. COORDINATED MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS RESPONSE WORKING GROUP

(a) Creation. There is created the Coordinated Mental Health Crisis Response Working Group for the purpose of developing and articulating a predictable and coordinated system of response to mental health crises among law enforcement, emergency medical service providers, emergency departments, health care providers, and community mental health service providers.

(b) Membership. The Working Group shall be composed of the following members:
(1) the Commissioner of Mental Health or designee, who shall serve as
Chair;

(2) the Commissioner of Public Safety or designee;

(3) the Director of the Office of Emergency Medical Services or
designee;

(4) the Chief Superior Judge;

(5) a representative of hospital emergency departments, appointed by
the Vermont Association of Hospitals and Health Systems;

(6) a representative of designated and specialized service agencies,
appointed by Vermont Care Partners;

(7) an individual who has previously experienced a mental health crisis,
appointed by Vermont Psychiatric Survivors; and

(8) the family member of an individual who has previously experienced
a mental health crisis, appointed by the Vermont chapter of the National
Alliance on Mental Illness.

(c) Powers and duties. The Working Group shall explore the existing
response to mental health crises in Vermont and develop a predictable,
coordinated response plan across public safety and health care sectors. The
Working Group shall determine a process for:

(1) educating individuals who respond to mental health crises about the
plan developed pursuant to this subsection;
(2) communicating with the public regarding the best way to access mental health crisis services; and

(3) ensuring individuals experiencing a mental health crisis are connected to therapeutic services in a safe environment once the initial response has concluded.

(d) Assistance. The Working Group shall have the administrative, technical, and legal assistance of the Department of Mental Health.

(e) Report. On or before December 1, 2022, the Working Group shall submit a written report to the House Committee on Health Care and the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare with its findings and any recommendations for legislative action.

(f) Meetings.

(1) The Commissioner of Mental Health or designee shall call the first meeting of the Working Group to occur on or before August 1, 2022.

(2) A majority of the membership shall constitute a quorum.

(3) The Working Group shall cease to exist on December 1, 2022.

(g) Compensation and reimbursement. Members of the Working Group shall be entitled to per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses as permitted under 32 V.S.A. § 1010 for not more than four meetings. These payments shall be made from monies appropriated to the Department of Mental Health.
Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2022.