

1 * * * Suicide Prevention Lifeline Call Centers and Suicide Prevention
2 Commission * * *

3 Sec. A. APPROPRIATION; VERMONT’S NATIONAL SUICIDE
4 PREVENTION LIFELINE

5 In fiscal year 2023, the General Assembly shall appropriate \$1,350,000.00
6 from the General Fund to the Department of Mental Health for the purpose of
7 funding an anticipated increase in the use of the State’s suicide prevention
8 lifeline call centers.

9 Sec. B. 18 V.S.A. chapter 178 is added to read:

10 CHAPTER 178. SUICIDE PREVENTION

11 § 7451. 988 MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

12 SPECIAL FUND

13 There is created the 988 Mental Health Crisis and Suicide Prevention
14 Special Fund, a special fund established and managed pursuant to 32 V.S.A.
15 chapter 7, subchapter 5 and administered by the Department of Mental Health.
16 The Special Fund shall solely fund expenditures recommended by the 988
17 Mental Health Crisis and Suicide Prevention Commission established pursuant
18 to section 7452 of this chapter. The Special Fund shall consist of
19 appropriations from the General Fund; grants and gifts for deposit in the
20 Special Fund; interest, premiums, gains, or other earnings on the Special Fund;
21 and monies from any other source that is deposited in or transferred to the
22 Special Fund. Monies in the Special Fund:

1 (1) shall not revert at the end of a State fiscal year but shall remain
2 available for the purposed of the Special Fund in subsequent State fiscal years;

3 (2) shall not be subject to transfer to any other fund or to transfer,
4 assign, or reassign for any other use or purpose outside of those specified; and

5 (3) shall be continuously appropriated for the purpose of the Special
6 Fund.

7 § 7452. 988 MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

8 COMMISSION

9 (a) Creation. There is created the 988 Mental Health Crisis and Suicide
10 Prevention Commission to oversee all State-funded suicide prevention
11 operations and make recommendations on expenditures from the 988 Mental
12 Health Crisis and Suicide Prevention Special Fund established pursuant to
13 section 7451 of this chapter.

14 (b) Membership. The Commission shall be composed of the following
15 members:

16 (1) the Commissioner of Mental Health or designee, who shall serve as
17 Chair;

18 (2) the Commissioner of Public Safety or designee;

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

21 (4) the Chief Superior Judge;

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

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

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

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

8 (9) a representative, appointed by the Vermont National Suicide
9 Prevention Lifeline Call Centers; and

10 (10) a representative of the Vermont Suicide Prevention Coalition,
11 appointed by the Vermont Suicide Prevention Center.

12 (c) Powers and duties. The Commission shall:

13 (1) oversee all State-funded suicide prevention operations, including the
14 Zero Suicide program and suicide prevention lifeline call centers; and

15 (2) make recommendations on expenditures from the 988 Mental Health
16 Crisis and Suicide Prevention Special Fund.

17 (d) Assistance. The Commission shall have the administrative, technical,
18 and legal assistance of the Department of Mental Health.

19 (e) Report. Annually, on or before January 15, the Commission shall
20 submit a written report to the House Committee on Appropriations and on
21 Health Care and to the Senate Committees on Appropriations and on Health
22 and Welfare with its recommendations for expenditures from the 988 Mental

1 Health Crisis and Suicide Prevention Special Fund and its findings and any
2 recommendations for other legislative action.

3 (f) Meetings.

4 (1) The Chair shall call the first meeting of the Commission to occur on
5 or before September 1, 2022.

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

7 (g) Compensation and reimbursement. Members of the Commission shall
8 be entitled to per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses as
9 permitted under 32 V.S.A. § 1010 for not more than four meetings. These
10 payments shall be made from monies appropriated to the Department of
11 Mental Health.

12 * * * Appropriation for Zero Suicide Program Expansion * * *

13 Sec. C. ZERO SUICIDE PROGRAM EXPANSION

14 In fiscal year 2023, the General Assembly shall appropriate \$1,200,000.00
15 from the General Fund to the Department of Mental Health for the purpose of
16 expanding the Vermont Suicide Prevention Center's Zero Suicide program and
17 other comprehensive suicide prevention initiatives to engage a statewide
18 coalition with broad public and private sector representation and build
19 coalition partner capacity to assist in suicide prevention planning,
20 implementation, and evaluation that includes:

21 (1) expanding the Zero Suicide program through workforce
22 development and technical assistance to 10 designated agencies, two

1 specialized service agencies, and preferred providers, including expansion to
2 primary care practices;

3 (2) build school-based pathways to care through the Umatter for Schools
4 program;

5 (3) offer access to ongoing gatekeeper training throughout all
6 communities with a focus on cultural competencies;

7 (4) support public education and information to reduce stigma
8 associated with help-seeking and to improve awareness and access to suicide
9 prevention support and services; and

10 (5) support, coordination, or offer, or any combination thereof,
11 comprehensive suicide prevention and postvention training throughout the
12 State.

13 * * * Director of Suicide Prevention * * *

14 Sec. D. 18 V.S.A. § 7209 is added to read:

15 § 7209. DIRECTOR OF SUICIDE PREVENTION

16 (a) There is established a permanent, full-time Director of Suicide
17 Prevention position within the Department of Mental Health to coordinate
18 statewide suicide prevention efforts across State government and in
19 collaboration with community partners, mental health and health care
20 providers, crisis providers, and other organizations regularly interfacing with
21 individuals at risk of death by suicide.

22 (b) The Director shall:

1 (1) work with the stakeholders, such as the Vermont Suicide Prevention
2 Coalition, to oversee the development and implementation of a comprehensive
3 State plan for suicide prevention; and

4 (2) promote positive youth development, for lifelong mental health
5 through school health and health education in coordination with the Agency of
6 Education.

7 (c) Annually, on or before January 1, the Director shall submit a written
8 report to the House Committee on Health Care and to the Senate Committee on
9 Health and Welfare on the development and implementation of the
10 comprehensive State plan for suicide prevention required pursuant to
11 subsection (b) of this section.

12 Sec. E. APPROPRIATION; DIRECTOR OF SUICIDE PREVENTION

13 In fiscal year 2023, the General Assembly shall appropriate \$125,000.00
14 from the General Fund to the Department of Mental Health for the purpose of
15 establishing a full-time Director of Suicide Prevention position pursuant to
16 Sec. D of this act.

17 * * * Supports for Older Vermonters and Veterans * * *

18 Sec. F. SUPPORTS FOR OLDER VERMONTERS AND VETERANS

19 In fiscal year 2023, the General Assembly shall appropriate \$100,000.00
20 from the General Fund to the Department of Disabilities, Aging, and
21 Independent Living for the purpose of expanding the Elder Care Clinician
22 Program or the Vet to Vet Visitor Program, or both.

1 * * * Coordinated Mental Health Crisis Response Working Group* * *

2 Sec. G. COORDINATED MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS RESPONSE

3 WORKING GROUP

4 (a) Creation. There is created the Coordinated Mental Health Crisis
5 Response Working Group for the purpose of developing and articulating a
6 predictable and coordinated system of response to mental health crises among
7 suicide prevention lifeline call centers, law enforcement, emergency medical
8 service providers, emergency departments, health care providers, and
9 community mental health service providers.

10 (b) Membership. The Working Group shall be composed of the following
11 members:

12 (1) the Commissioner of Mental Health or designee, who shall serve as
13 Chair;

14 (2) the Commissioner of Public Safety or designee;

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

17 (4) the Chief Superior Judge;

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

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

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

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

4 (9) a representative, appointed by the Vermont National Suicide
5 Prevention Lifeline Call Centers; and

6 (10) a representative of the Vermont Suicide Prevention Coalition,
7 appointed by the Vermont Suicide Prevention Center.

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

12 (1) educating individuals who respond to mental health crises about the
13 plan developed pursuant to this subsection;

14 (2) communicating with the public regarding the best way to access
15 mental health crisis services; and

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

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

21 (e) Report. On or before December 1, 2022, the Working Group shall
22 submit a written report to the House Committee on Health Care and the Senate

1 Committee on Health and Welfare with its findings and any recommendations
2 for legislative action.

3 (f) Meetings.

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

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

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

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