

STATE OF NEW YORK

7177

2021-2022 Regular Sessions

IN ASSEMBLY

April 26, 2021

Introduced by M. of A. GUNTHER -- read once and referred to the Committee on Mental Health

AN ACT to amend the county law, in relation to a 9-8-8 suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline system

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. Short title. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "9-8-8 Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Crisis Act".

§ 2. The county law is amended by adding a new article 6-B to read as follows:

ARTICLE 6-B

9-8-8 SUICIDE PREVENTION AND MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS ACT

Section 340. Definitions.

341. 9-8-8 suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline system.

342. Mobile crisis teams.

343. Establishment of fees for system costs.

344. Application; limitations; exemptions.

§ 340. Definitions. When used in this article, the following words and phrases shall have the following meanings unless the specific context clearly indicates otherwise:

1. "9-8-8" means the three digit phone number designated by the federal communications commission for the purpose of connecting individuals experiencing a mental health crisis with suicide prevention and mental health crisis counselors, mobile crisis teams, and crisis receiving and stabilization services and other mental health crises services through the national suicide prevention lifeline.

2. "9-8-8 crisis hotline center" means a state-identified and funded center participating in the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline Network to respond to statewide or regional 9-8-8 calls.

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [-] is old law to be omitted.

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1 3. "Crisis receiving and stabilization services" means facilities
2 providing short-term observation and crisis stabilization services to
3 all referrals in a home-like environment for no longer than twenty-four
4 hours.

5 4. "Mental health professional" means any of the following, but not
6 limited to:

7 (a) a licensed clinical social worker, pursuant to subdivision seven
8 of section nine hundred twenty-three of the public health law;

9 (b) a licensed psychologist, pursuant to section 10.03 of the mental
10 hygiene law;

11 (c) a registered professional nurse, pursuant to subdivision one of
12 section six thousand nine hundred two of the education law; and

13 (d) a licensed marriage and family therapist, pursuant to subdivision
14 nine of section nine hundred twenty-three of the public health law.

15 5. "Mobile crisis teams" means a team including, but not limited to,
16 mental health professionals, family advocates, and peers, as defined by
17 section three hundred forty-two of this article, to provide onsite
18 community-based intervention for individuals who are experiencing a
19 mental health crisis.

20 6. "National suicide prevention lifeline" or "NSPL" means the national
21 network of local crisis centers that provide free and confidential
22 emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress
23 twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week via a toll-free hotline
24 number, which receives calls made through the 9-8-8 system. The toll-
25 free number is maintained by the Assistant Secretary for Mental Health
26 and Substance Use under Section 50-E-3 of the Public Health Service Act,
27 Section 290bb-36c of Title 42 of the United States Code.

28 7. "Peers" means individuals employed on the basis of their personal
29 experience of mental illness, addiction, or both, and recovery there-
30 from, and who meet the certification requirements set forth by the New
31 York state peer specialist certification board.

32 8. "Family advocates" means individuals who support person-centered
33 planning, offer culturally responsive trauma-informed care and support
34 families and youth with mental health or co-occurring disorders and have
35 experience working with multiple agencies and providers, including, but
36 not limited to, mental health, physical health, substance abuse, juve-
37 nile justice, developmental disabilities, and other state and local
38 systems of care.

39 9. "Veterans crisis line" or "VCL" means the veterans crisis line
40 maintained by the secretary of veterans affairs pursuant to section
41 1720F(h) of Title 38 of the United States Code.

42 10. "Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration"
43 ("SAMHSA") means the agency of the United States Department of Health
44 and Human Services.

45 § 341. 9-8-8 suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline
46 system. 1. The department of public service, in consultation with the
47 commissioner of the office of mental health and the commissioner of the
48 office of addiction services and supports shall, on or before July
49 sixteenth, two thousand twenty-two, designate a crisis hotline center or
50 centers to provide crisis intervention services and crisis care coordi-
51 nation to individuals accessing the 9-8-8 suicide prevention and mental
52 health crisis hotline from anywhere within the state twenty-four hours a
53 day, seven days a week.

54 (a) A designated hotline center shall have an active agreement with
55 the administrator of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline for
56 participation within the network.

1 (b) A designated hotline center shall meet NSPL requirements and best
2 practices guidelines for operation and clinical standards.

3 (c) A designated hotline center shall utilize technology including
4 chat and text that is interoperable between and across crisis and emer-
5 gency systems used throughout the state and with the administrator of
6 the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.

7 (d) A designated hotline center shall transfer any call made to 9-1-1
8 pertaining to a mental health crisis to a 9-8-8 crisis hotline center.
9 If a law enforcement, medical or fire response is also needed, 9-8-8 and
10 9-1-1 operators shall coordinate the simultaneous deployment of services
11 with mobile crisis teams.

12 (e) A designated hotline center shall have the authority to deploy
13 crisis and outgoing services, including mobile crisis teams, and coordi-
14 nate access to crisis receiving and stabilization services, as appropri-
15 ate, and according to guidelines and best practices established by the
16 NSPL.

17 (f) The department of public service in conjunction with the commis-
18 sioner of the office of mental health and the commissioner of the office
19 of addiction services and supports shall have joint oversight of suicide
20 prevention and crisis service activities and essential coordination with
21 a designated 9-8-8 hotline center, and shall work in concert with NSPL
22 and VCL networks for the purposes of ensuring consistency of public
23 messaging about 9-8-8 services.

24 (g) A designated hotline center shall meet the requirements set forth
25 by the NSPL for serving high risk and specialized populations including
26 but not limited to: Black, African American, Hispanic, Latino, Asian,
27 Pacific Islander, Native American, Alaskan Native; Lesbian, gay, bisexu-
28 al, transgender, nonbinary, queer, and questioning individuals; individ-
29 uals with intellectual and developmental disabilities; individuals expe-
30 riencing homelessness or housing instability; immigrants and refugees;
31 children and youth; older adults; and religious communities as identi-
32 fied by the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Adminis-
33 tration, including training requirements and policies for transferring
34 such callers to an appropriate specialized center or subnetworks within
35 or outside the NSPL network and for providing linguistically and
36 culturally competent care.

37 (h) A designated hotline center shall provide follow-up services as
38 needed to individuals accessing the 9-8-8 suicide prevention and mental
39 health crisis hotline consistent with guidance and policies established
40 by the NSPL.

41 2. The commissioner of the office of mental health and the commis-
42 sioner of the office of addiction services and supports shall establish
43 a comprehensive list of reporting metrics to be included in the annual
44 report of the 9-8-8 suicide prevention and mental health crisis
45 hotline's usage, services and impact which shall include, at a minimum:

46 (a) The volume of requests for assistance that the 9-8-8 suicide
47 prevention and mental health crisis hotline received;

48 (b) The average length of time taken to respond to each request for
49 assistance, and the aggregate rates of call abandonment;

50 (c) The types of requests for assistance that the 9-8-8 suicide
51 prevention and mental health crisis hotline received;

52 (d) The number of mobile crisis teams dispatched;

53 (e) The number of individuals contacted by mobile crisis teams;

54 (f) The number of such individuals transported for care by mobile
55 crisis teams;

1 (g) The number of such individuals transferred by mobile crisis team
2 responders to the custody of law enforcement; and

3 (h) The age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin of individuals
4 contacted, transported, or transferred by each mental health response
5 unit.

6 3. The commissioner of the office of mental health and the commis-
7 sioner of the office of addiction services and supports shall submit an
8 annual report on or by December thirty-first, two thousand twenty-three
9 and annually thereafter, regarding the comprehensive list of reporting
10 metrics to the governor, the temporary president of the senate, the
11 speaker of the assembly, the minority leader of the senate and the
12 minority leader of the assembly.

13 § 342. Mobile crisis teams. The commissioner of the office of mental
14 health and the commissioner of the office of addiction services and
15 supports shall provide onsite response services for crisis calls utiliz-
16 ing state or local mobile crisis teams.

17 1. A mobile crisis team shall include, but not be limited to, mental
18 health professionals, family advocates and peers, as defined by section
19 three hundred forty of this article;

20 2. A mobile crisis team shall collaborate on data and crisis response
21 protocols with local law enforcement agencies as co-responders, only as
22 needed, to respond to high-risk situations that are unmanageable without
23 law enforcement;

24 3. A mobile crisis team shall collaborate on data and crisis response
25 protocols with local emergency medical services as co-responders, only
26 as needed to respond to situations that require such services.

27 § 343. Establishment of fees for system costs. 1. The commissioner of
28 the department of taxation and finance, in consultation with the commis-
29 sioner of the office of mental health and the commissioner of the office
30 of addiction services and supports, shall establish and maintain a 9-8-8
31 trust fund for the purposes of creating and maintaining a 9-8-8 suicide
32 prevention and mental health crisis system pursuant to the National
33 Suicide Hotline Designation Act of 2020 and the Federal Communication
34 Commission's rules adopted July sixteenth, two thousand twenty, and
35 national guidelines for crisis care.

36 2. (a) The fund shall consist of:

37 (i) monies from a 9-8-8 fee assessed on users pursuant to section
38 three hundred forty-four of this article;

39 (ii) appropriations, if any;

40 (iii) grants and gifts intended for deposit in the fund;

41 (iv) interest, premiums, gains, or other earnings on the fund; and

42 (v) any other monies that are deposited in or transferred to the fund.

43 (b) Monies in the fund:

44 (i) do not revert at the end of any fiscal year and remain available
45 for the purposes of the fund in subsequent fiscal years;

46 (ii) are not subject to transfer to any other fund or to transfer,
47 assessment, or reassessment for any other use or purpose outside of
48 those specified in this section; and

49 (iii) are continuously dedicated for the purposes of the fund.

50 3. The commissioner of the department of taxation and finance in
51 conjunction with the commissioner of the office of mental health and the
52 commissioner of the office of addiction services and supports shall
53 submit an annual report of fund deposits and expenditures into the 9-8-8
54 trust fund, to the governor, the temporary president of the senate, the
55 speaker of the assembly, the minority leader of the senate, the minority

1 leader of the assembly, and the chair of the federal communications
2 commission.

3 § 344. Application; limitations; exemptions. 1. The commissioner of
4 public service, consistent with the National Suicide Hotline Designation
5 Act of 2020, shall establish a monthly 9-8-8 fee on each resident that
6 is a subscriber of wireless communication service or voice over internet
7 protocol service, as defined by section three hundred one of this chap-
8 ter at a fixed rate that provides for the creation, operation, and main-
9 tenance of a 9-8-8 suicide prevention and mental health crisis system
10 and the continuum of services provided pursuant to federal guidelines
11 for crisis services.

12 2. The 9-8-8 fee shall not be applied to mobile service users who
13 receive benefits under the federal Lifeline program as defined in 47 CFR
14 54.401.

15 § 3. This act shall take effect immediately.