

Support SB21-154

Enacting the 9-8-8 Suicide Prevention and Behavioral Health Crisis Response Hotline in Colorado

Sponsors: Sens. Simpson (R) and Kolker (D), Reps. Cutter (D) and Soper (R)

Colorado has one of the highest suicide rates in the country, especially among youth. Studies have shown that most suicide attempts are made within three hours or less of someone having suicidal thoughts, and some in as little as 5 minutes. To address a growing suicide rate in the U.S., Congress passed the National Suicide Prevention Act last October that establishes the 9-8-8 mental health crisis hotline across the country—much like 911. With a memorable three-digit number, access to trained crisis counselors will be just seconds away. The law requires the states to establish this number by July of 2022.

The proposed bill would enact federal legislation establishing the 9-8-8 crisis response number and creates a sustainable funding option for receiving and responding to those calls in the community.

SB21-154 would:

- Create an enterprise for the purpose of:
 - Defining the 9-8-8 crisis hotline center as a state-identified enterprise with the intention of participating in the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline Network to respond to statewide or regional 9-8-8 calls.
 - Designating a crisis hotline center to provide crisis care coordination and crisis intervention services to individuals accessing the 988 suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline from any jurisdiction within Colorado, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
 - Requiring the crisis line to provide follow-up services to individuals accessing 9-8-8.
 - Authorizing the enterprise to establish a monthly surcharge on subscribers' mobile and/or IP-enabled voice services, including landlines to provide for a sustainable funding source for the 9-8-8 line. (Funding from the surcharge will be housed and dispersed by the state Public Utilities Commission to cover call center expenses. Allowable expenses include additional call center personnel to handle the increase in calls, suicide prevention and counseling training for this staff, and increased funding for crisis response mobile teams. The surcharge is for all phones, except pre-paid plans (like Cricket), which will be a flat rate at the time of purchase.)
 - Requiring an annual report of the 9-8-8 suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline's usage, and services provided shall be made to the state legislature and to the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

For more information please contact Moe Keller, mkeller@mentalhealthcolorado.org, 303.478.6757.

Supporters:



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