
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO SUICIDE PREVENTION.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that suicide is a major
2 public health concern. According to the World Health
3 Organization, suicide claims approximately seven hundred
4 thousand lives worldwide each year. While suicide impacts
5 people of all ages, it is the fourth leading cause of death for
6 young people between the ages of fifteen and twenty-nine. In
7 Hawaii, suicides were the leading cause of fatal injuries during
8 the five-year period of 2013 to 2017, accounting for twenty-five
9 per cent of deaths.

10 Suicide rates in the State vary by area, with neighbor
11 island and rural communities seeing higher rates than urban
12 areas. According to the department of health's Hawaii injury
13 prevention plan 2018-2023, from 2013 to 2017, the statewide
14 suicide rate was 63.51 deaths per one hundred thousand
15 individuals. In the same time period, for every one hundred
16 thousand people, there were 97.19, 83.23, and 97.14 deaths in
17 the counties of Hawaii, Maui, and Kauai, respectively. The city



1 and county of Honolulu's suicide rate, at 52.04 deaths for every
2 one hundred thousand people, was lower than the state average.

3 According to the World Health Organization, death by
4 suicide may happen impulsively in moments of crisis related to
5 financial problems, relationship struggles, violence, abuse, and
6 feelings of isolation. A previous suicide attempt is the most
7 significant risk factor for individuals. For every person that
8 dies by suicide, more than thirty others attempt suicide.
9 Studies show suicide rates are high among groups who experience
10 discrimination such as immigrants, indigenous peoples, and the
11 lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender communities.

12 The legislature further finds that the stigma of seeking
13 mental health counseling creates barriers to providing care and
14 support to individuals in crisis. In 2020, Congress enacted the
15 National Suicide Designation Act, which established a
16 nationwide, three-digit suicide and mental health crisis call
17 line. On July 16, 2020, the Federal Communications Commission
18 adopted rules to establish "9-8-8" as the new, nationwide three-
19 digit phone number to connect to the National Suicide Prevention
20 Lifeline and Veterans Crisis Line. The shorter number is
21 intended to be easier to remember and more accessible to



1 individuals experiencing a mental health crisis. The National
2 Suicide Designation Act gives states flexibility to invest and
3 implement different programs to support call centers and
4 professionals who respond to mental health crisis calls.
5 Beginning July 16, 2022, dialing "9-8-8" will route calls to the
6 National Suicide Prevention Hotline. States across the nation
7 sought to address this issue by passing legislation to prepare
8 and implement the new national suicide prevention lifeline.

9 The legislature further finds that there is a need to enact
10 the suicide lifeline to assist Hawaii's people during a mental
11 health crisis. In 2021, Nebraska passed legislation to create a
12 task force that would create and develop a plan to integrate the
13 suicide and mental health call line. The task force would be
14 responsible for ensuring the accessibility of the lifeline and
15 staffing the statewide lifeline with qualified mental or
16 behavioral health professionals. Seventeen states introduced
17 variations of the Nebraska legislation, while fourteen states
18 enacted legislation in the 2021 legislative session.

19 The purpose of this Act is to establish a task force to
20 develop an implementation plan to integrate and utilize the new



1 9-8-8 calling code of national suicide and mental health crisis
2 lifeline for mental health-related emergencies.

3 SECTION 2. (a) There is established a suicide and mental
4 health crisis lifeline task force. The department of health
5 shall be responsible for administering the work of the task
6 force. The goals of the task force shall be to:

- 7 (1) Develop an overall implementation plan to integrate
8 and utilize the 9-8-8 calling code of the National
9 Suicide Prevention Lifeline;
- 10 (2) Identify and collaborate with community partners to
11 create or invest in existing programs to support call
12 centers dedicated to the 9-8-8 lifeline through
13 investing in support for qualified mental health or
14 behavioral professionals who respond to mental health
15 crisis calls; and
- 16 (3) Recommend to the legislature an implementation
17 framework, along with other proposals for policies and
18 legislation, necessary to facilitate the
19 implementation of the 9-8-8 lifeline.

20 (b) The suicide and mental health crisis lifeline task
21 force shall consist of the following members:



- 1 (1) The director of behavioral health, who shall serve as
2 co-chair;
- 3 (2) The chair of the suicide prevention Hawaii task force,
4 who shall serve as co-chair;
- 5 (3) The director of health, or their designee;
- 6 (4) The director of human services, or their designee;
- 7 (5) A representative from the department of education;
- 8 (6) A representative from the University of Hawaii;
- 9 (7) A representative from the state council on mental
10 health established by section 334-10, Hawaii Revised
11 Statutes;
- 12 (8) The chair of the house of representatives standing
13 committee on health, human services, and homelessness,
14 or their designee;
- 15 (9) The chair of the senate standing committee on human
16 services, or their designee;
- 17 (10) One representative each from the regional suicide
18 prevention Hawaii task forces that oversee Oahu, Maui,
19 Kauai, and Hawaii;
- 20 (11) A representative of behavioral and mental health
21 service providers, to be designated by the governor;



1 (12) A representative who is a mental or behavioral health
2 clinician licensed to practice in the State, to be
3 designated by the governor;

4 (13) A representative from the Hawai'i Primary Care
5 Association; and

6 (14) A representative of the community who is a mental or
7 behavioral health advocate, to be designated by the
8 governor.

9 (c) The task force shall submit a report of its findings
10 and recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the
11 legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of
12 the regular session of 2023.

13 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
14 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
15 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2022-2023 for
16 the development and implementation of the 9-8-8 calling code of
17 the suicide and mental health lifeline task force.

18 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of
19 health for the purposes of this Act.

20 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on January 1, 2050.



Report Title:

Suicide Prevention; Task Force; Membership; Appropriation

Description:

Creates a task force to develop and implement a plan to utilize the 9-8-8 calling code of the National Suicide and Mental Health Lifeline. Makes an appropriation. Effective 1/1/2050. (SD1)

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