

AB 988 Outcomes Review Hearing

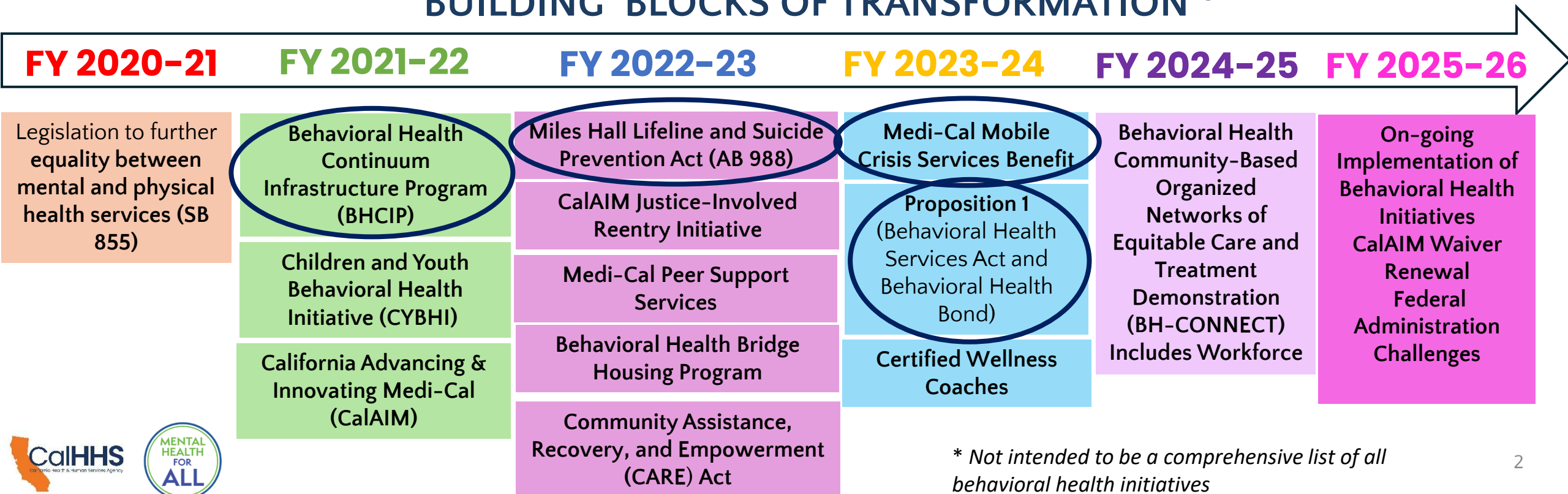
May 12, 2026

California Health & Human Services Agency
Person Centered. Equity Focused. Data Driven.

Building Out California's Behavioral Health Continuum of Care




BUILDING BLOCKS OF TRANSFORMATION *



* Not intended to be a comprehensive list of all behavioral health initiatives

AB 988 Implementation



Building California's Comprehensive 988-Crisis System:

A Strategic Blueprint

AB 988
Five-Year
Implementation
Plan to the
State Legislature

December 31, 2024

Implementation of the **Miles Hall Lifeline and Suicide Prevention Act** (AB 988) to build to capacity **988 Crisis Centers**, which provide free and confidential emotional support to people in a suicidal crisis or experiencing a behavioral health emergency.

CalHHS submitted the **AB 988 Five-Year Implementation Plan** to the Legislature in January 2025.

The enacted Fiscal Year 2025-26 Budget includes **\$30 million** in funding to support 988 Crisis Centers

Community Engagement in AB 988 Five-Year Plan

Community engagement activities sought to gather input and perspectives from a broad cross-section of individuals, organizations, and systems connected to the crisis care continuum

- **7** public meetings of the Policy Advisory Group (**43** members)
- **21** public meetings of seven Workgroups (**140** members)
- **13** focus groups with populations with lived experience or otherwise impacted by crisis services (**90** participants)
 - **3** Native American focus groups (**43** participants): rural and elder tribal community in Northern California; urban native youths in Sacramento county, and adults from urban/suburban populations in southern California.
- Over **85** interviews with Policy Advisory Group members, crisis-related providers, community groups and advocacy organizations, county behavioral health departments, tribal community members, 988 Crisis Centers and other crisis-related service partners

Coordination with CalHHS Departments and State Agencies



California's leadership hub during major emergencies and disasters.



Oversees 12 departments and five offices, including DHCS, DMHC, CDPH, and EMSA



California's public health department



California's Medicaid Single State Agency



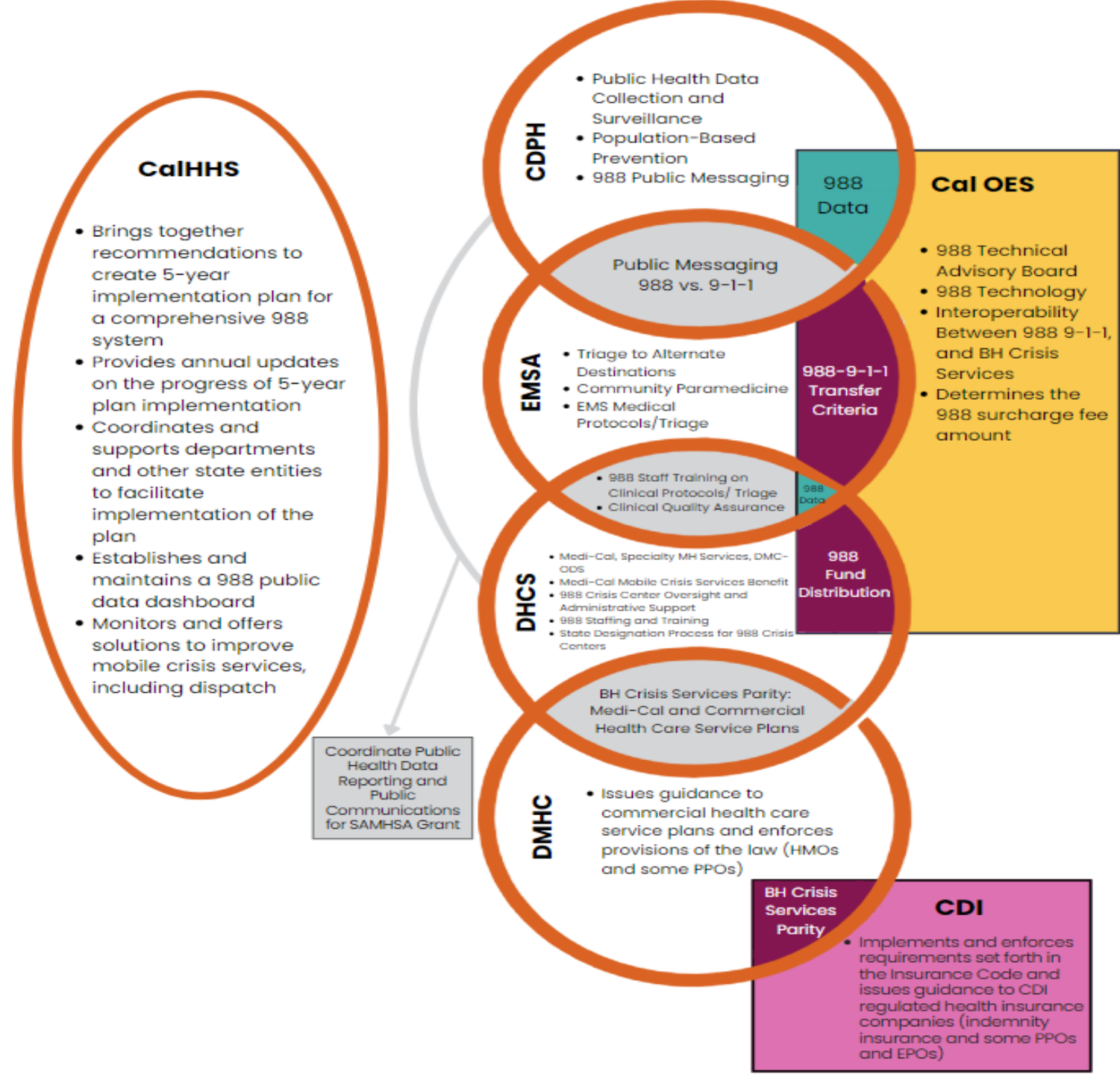
Issues guidance to commercial plans (Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs) and some Preferred Provider Organizations (PPOs)) and enforces provisions of the law



Provide statewide coordination and leadership of local EMS systems.

Recommended AB 988 State Governance Structure

Areas of Overlap:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EMSA and CDPH: Public Messaging: 988 vs. 9-1-1 • DHCS and EMSA: 988 Staff Training on Clinical Protocols/Triage and Clinical Quality Assurance • DMHC and DHCS: BH Crisis Services Parity: Medi-Cal and Commercial Insurance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cal OES and EMSA: 988-9-1-1 Transfer Criteria • Cal OES and DHCS: 988 Fund Distribution • CDI and DMHC: BH Crisis Services Parity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cal OES, DHCS, EMSA, CDPH: 988 Data
<p>— DHCS and CDPH: Coordinate Public Health Data Reporting and Public Communications for Grant</p>



Agency Updates

Partnership with The Trevor Project

- **CalHHS** partnered with The Trevor Project to launch a pilot training program to provide California's 988 crisis counselors with enhanced skills to support LGBTQ+ youth (in addition to existing specific training).

The Trevor Project:

- conducted 80+ interactive virtual 90-minute training sessions*
- trained over **500** voluntary attendees from 11 CA 988 centers*

In post-training surveys, counselors overwhelmingly found the trainings:

- useful (100%)
- effective at increasing knowledge of mental health ((97%) and LGBTQ+ identities (98%)
- and were very likely to recommend it to others (87%)

*Between 12/2/2025 and 4/24/2026

Department Accomplishments

Training and technical assistance for counties and providers

- **DHCS'** Breakthrough Series is focused on identifying and solving real-world mobile crisis payment problems with commercial insurance using a collaborative approach emphasizing assessment, billing success, payer clarity and documentation.

Developed **988 training standards** built on the national guidelines established by Vibrant Emotional Health and hosted multiple technical assistance events and trainings focused on cultural responsiveness, language access and other populations of focus.

Medi-Cal Mobile Crisis Training and Technical Assistance Center (M-TAC), DHCS has convened a four-month Breakthrough Series that started in March 2026 for county behavioral health mobile crisis programs on securing commercial insurance payments for mobile crisis response services. There are currently **15 counties participating**.

Department Accomplishments

Commercial Health Plan Reimbursement of Crisis Services

- **DMHC** continues to implement strategies to support sustainable crisis systems at the local level that are connected to broader behavioral health transformation efforts, including behavioral health parity.

- Has made progress on **funding and sustainability** development guidance in consultation with counties and health plans.
- Has collected claims data from **20** counties on mobile crisis services and analyzed **1200** denied and underpaid claims.
- DMHC is **developing TTA** and will continue to work with plans and providers to improve the billing and claiming process.

Department Accomplishments

- **EMSA** operates at the intersection of the 911-system, EMS and hospitals, and the successful operationalization of the 988-system relies on the integration of 988 into 911 protocol. EMSA participates in the State 988 Technical Advisory Board led by the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (CalOES) which continues work to develop recommendations for the 9-1-1/988 transfer guide. This guide is intended to clarify when and how to initiate a transfer between 911 and 988, so that appropriate support is provided to individuals calling either line for assistance.

- Coordinate partnership between **911 and 988** to ensure individuals experiencing crisis access appropriate emergency medical services and transportation to care

Department Accomplishments

Raising Awareness of 988-Crisis Services

- **CDPH** Trusted Messenger Campaign (funded by BHTA Prevention Funds)
 - Close communication gaps in communities with health disparities
 - Foster empathy, understanding, and respect for public health information
 - Increase credibility and the likelihood that health messages are heard, trusted, and acted upon.
 - Build trust, support better health decisions and improved outcomes

Prioritize **\$2 Million** for 988- Crisis Centers beginning July 2026

Thank you