



AGENDA ITEM 15

Information

Mental Health Wellness Act: California's Crisis Continuum

Item Goals

- The Commission will review California's crisis continuum and 988 Five-Year Implementation Plan and begin a discussion on future priorities for Mental Health Wellness Act (MHWA) funds.

Behavioral Health Landscape

- The California Health and Human Services Agency (CalHHS) released its Crisis Care Continuum Plan in 2023 to address the state's growing need for behavioral health crisis services, particularly around suicide, mental health, and substance use. The Plan outlines a vision for an equitable, coordinated, and statewide crisis care system, building on recent policy shifts like the 988 hotline and substantial investments in infrastructure and workforce, while emphasizing prevention, access, and long-term sustainability.
- California's 988 Five-Year Implementation Plan, developed in 2023–2024 following the Miles Hall Lifeline and Suicide Prevention Act (AB 988), outlines the state's roadmap for building a comprehensive, statewide behavioral health crisis system centered around the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. The plan focuses on expanding equitable, community-based care through 988 call, text, and chat services; integrating with 911 and mobile crisis teams; and establishing foundational principles and infrastructure to ensure timely, high-quality crisis response for all Californians.
- The Behavioral Health Services Act refocuses California's behavioral health system on individuals with severe mental illness, substance use disorders, and co-occurring disorders. Subsequent grant opportunities should focus on these individuals and priorities.

Relevant Commission Work

- The MHWA provides the Commission with \$20 million in annual grants to “be allocated to support crisis prevention, early intervention, and crisis response strategies” (WIC 5848.5(G)(1)(A)). Funds are committed through June 2027.
- The Commission administers MHWA grants based on priorities set earlier by the Commission. The following grants have already been administered or are currently underway:
 - Emergency Psychiatric Assessment Treatment and Healing (EmPATH) units
 - PEARLS and Age Wise programs for older adults
 - Maternal behavioral health and behavioral health of children ages 0-5
 - Medication-assisted treatment (MAT) for substance use disorders
- Grants/contracts to support full service partnerships and the peer continuum, including peer respites, are still pending.