



May 24, 2021

The Honorable Xavier Becerra, Secretary  
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services  
200 Independence Ave, SW  
Washington, DC 20201

The Honorable Shalanda Young, Acting Director  
Office of Management and Budget  
1650 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20503

***RE: SAMHSA report on 988 crisis infrastructure***

Dear Secretary Becerra and Acting Director Young:

We, the undersigned mental health and addiction organizations, are committed to helping ensure successful implementation of 988 — and improving the capacity of communities across the nation to not only answer the calls of people experiencing behavioral health crises, but also connect those people with the care they need.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has developed a crisis response [model](#) that will help reduce reliance on both law enforcement and emergency departments. The model consists of three core components: first, crisis call centers to answer 988 calls; second, mobile crisis teams that can provide an in-person response; and third, crisis receiving and stabilization programs that provide a safe, therapeutic setting. We support this model and applaud SAMHSA for their efforts thus far.

However, our country is still a long way from making effective 988 response a reality, and our success depends on having a comprehensive and well-informed strategy. The National Suicide Hotline Designation Act of 2020 (P.L. 116-172), which was signed into law on October 17, 2020, directed SAMHSA within six months of enactment to provide a report to Congress, detailing the resources necessary to make 988 operational and effective.

As Congress begins to develop the Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 appropriations bills and other potential infrastructure investment legislation, we urge you to release this report as soon as possible so its recommendations can be taken into account. In addition, because building the infrastructure to support an effective 988 crisis response will take multiple years of robust federal investment, we

respectfully request that the report's recommendations be reflected in the President's Budget Requests for future fiscal years as well.

We urge you to prioritize effective implementation of 988 to fight the ongoing impacts of the pandemic, which include significant and widespread increases in the need for mental health and addiction treatment. Our organizations stand united and ready to work with you to realize the promise of 988 as a much-needed resource for helping people experiencing behavioral health crises. To discuss further, please contact Angela Kimball, National Director of Advocacy & Public Policy, at [akimball@nami.org](mailto:akimball@nami.org).

Sincerely,

American Psychiatric Association  
American Psychological Association  
The Jewish Federations of North America  
The Kennedy Forum  
Mental Health America  
National Alliance on Mental Illness  
National Association for Behavioral Healthcare  
National Council for Mental Wellbeing  
Treatment Advocacy Center

CC: Norris Cochran, Acting Assistant Secretary for Financial Resources (ASFR)  
Rachel Pryor, Counselor for Health Policy, Health & Human Services (HHS)  
Tom Coderre, Acting Assistant Secretary, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)  
Sonia Chessen, Chief of Staff, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)  
Trina Dutta, Senior Advisor, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)