
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, or
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 that 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, the United States
15 Congress enacted the National Suicide Hotline Designation Act,
16 which established a nationwide, three-digit suicide and mental
17 health crisis call line. On July 16, 2020, the Federal
18 Communications Commission adopted rules to establish "9-8-8" as
19 the new, nationwide three-digit phone number to connect to the
20 National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and Veterans Crisis Line.
21 The shorter number is intended to be easier to remember and more



1 accessible to individuals experiencing a mental health crisis.
2 The National Suicide Hotline Designation Act of 2020 gives
3 states flexibility to invest in and implement different programs
4 to support call centers and professionals who respond to mental
5 health crisis calls. Beginning July 16, 2022, dialing "9-8-8"
6 will route calls to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.
7 States across the nation sought to address this issue by passing
8 legislation to prepare for implementation of the new National
9 Suicide Prevention Lifeline.

10 The legislature further finds that there is a need to enact
11 legislation addressing the new suicide prevention lifeline
12 calling code to assist Hawaii's people during a mental health
13 crisis. In 2021, Nebraska passed legislation to create a task
14 force that would develop a plan to integrate the 9-8-8 mental
15 health crisis call line. The task force would be responsible
16 for ensuring the accessibility of the lifeline and staffing the
17 statewide lifeline with qualified mental or behavioral health
18 professionals. Seventeen states introduced variations of the
19 Nebraska legislation, while fourteen states enacted legislation
20 in the 2021 legislative session.



1 The purpose of this Act is to establish a task force to
2 develop an implementation plan to integrate and utilize the new
3 9-8-8 calling code of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
4 for mental health-related emergencies.

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

9 (1) Develop an overall implementation plan to integrate
10 and utilize the 9-8-8 calling code of the National
11 Suicide Prevention Lifeline;

12 (2) Identify and collaborate with community partners to
13 create new programs or invest in existing programs to
14 support call centers dedicated to the 9-8-8 lifeline,
15 including investing in support for qualified mental
16 health or behavioral professionals who respond to
17 mental health crisis calls; and

18 (3) Recommend to the legislature an implementation
19 framework, along with other proposals for policies and
20 legislation, necessary to facilitate the
21 implementation of the 9-8-8 lifeline.



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

3 (1) The department of health's director of behavioral
4 health, who shall serve as co-chair;

5 (2) The chair of the prevent suicide Hawaii task force,
6 who shall be invited to participate and serve as co-
7 chair;

8 (3) The director of health, or the director's designee;

9 (4) The director of human services, or the director's
10 designee;

11 (5) A representative from the department of education;

12 (6) A representative from the university of Hawaii;

13 (7) A representative from the state council on mental
14 health established by section 334-10, Hawaii Revised
15 Statutes;

16 (8) The chairperson of the house of representatives
17 standing committee having primary jurisdiction over
18 health, human services, and homelessness issues, or
19 the chairperson's designee;



(9) The chairperson of the senate standing committee having primary jurisdiction over human services issues, or the chairperson's designee;

(10) One representative each from the regional prevent suicide Hawaii task forces that oversee Oahu, Maui county, Kauai, and Hawaii island, who shall be invited to participate;

(11) A representative of behavioral and mental health service providers, to be invited by the governor;

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

(13) A representative from the Hawai'i Primary Care Association, who shall be invited to participate; and

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

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



1 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
2 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
3 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2022-2023 for
4 the suicide and mental health crisis lifeline task force's
5 development of the implementation plan required by section 2 of
6 this Act.

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

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



Report Title:

DOH; Suicide Prevention; Task Force; Membership; Appropriation

Description:

Creates a task force to develop an implementation plan to utilize the 9-8-8 calling code of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. Makes an appropriation. Effective 1/1/2050. (SD2)

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