



## BOLSTERING THE CRISIS CARE CONTINUUM

### BOTTOM LINE



**The ideal crisis care system offers someone to talk to, someone to respond and a safe place to get help. Investments are needed to strengthen the crisis care continuum and bolster critical follow-up services.**

### THE ASK



**Cosponsor and support passage of the Continuity in Necessary Evaluative Crisis Treatment (CONNECT) Act of 2024 ([H.R. 6928](#)) and the Local 9-8-8 Response Act of 2023 ([H.R. 4974/S. 3444](#)).**

## WHY WE NEED THIS LEGISLATION

### CONNECT Act of 2024

The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline is an entry point to a larger continuum of care, and we must ensure a comprehensive, integrated and coordinated care system. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is currently piloting a three-year grant program designed to increase crisis centers' follow-up capabilities, to include check-ins to assess wellbeing and level of risk; outreach to ensure engagement in services and supports; collaboration with family, caregivers and natural social supports; and referrals based on the level of care needed.

Follow-up services have been shown to help prevent suicide and promote continuity of care.<sup>1</sup>

- The CONNECT Act of 2024 ([H.R. 6928](#)) makes follow-up care more accessible by awarding grants to eligible crisis centers to provide critical suicide prevention and crisis intervention services.
- By investing in follow-up services, the CONNECT Act highlights the pivotal role follow-up services play and works to ensure people in crisis have the resources they need.

## Local 9-8-8 Response Act of 2023

This legislation facilitates quicker access to crisis care while protecting user privacy. In less than three years, the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline has received more than 8 million calls, texts and chats from individuals seeking care and treatment in a moment of crisis.

While most people find their crisis is resolved during their initial interaction with the Lifeline, others may need additional timely and safe support. Calls to 988 are currently routed according to area code; however, many individuals call from outside the region covered by their phone number's area code. This can slow access to resources on the ground, which can create a problem if a caller needs access to a greater continuum of care, such as a crisis response team or crisis center.

The Local 9-8-8 Response Act of 2023 helps eliminate delays by connecting callers with the nearest call center, so they can receive the care they need from mental health professionals as quickly and safely as possible, while still protecting user privacy.

- The Local 9-8-8 Response Act of 2023 requires the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to route calls based on the proximity of the caller to the call center, not the area code. The bill specifies that a caller's specific location should not be revealed or discernible.
- The legislation requires carriers to allow calls and texts to 988, even if the cell phone from which the call is placed is inactive or the carrier is experiencing service interruptions or failures. It also requires multi-line systems like hotel and office phones to support direct dialing of 988 rather than requiring a caller to dial 9 or another number before dialing 988.



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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4877223/#:~:text=Evidence%20show%20follow%20Dups%20after,postal%20cards%20and%20the%20like>