



March 16, 2021

The Honorable Rebecca Bauer-Kahan
California Assembly Member
California State Capitol, Room 2130
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 988 (Bauer-Kahan): Support for the Miles Hall Lifeline Act – SUPPORT

Dear Assemblymember Bauer-Kahan,

On behalf of the California State Association of Psychiatrists, I write in support of your AB 988, known as the Miles Hall Lifeline Act, to implement the national 988 mental health emergency response system in California so that all Californians experiencing a mental health crisis can access life-saving care.

In 2020, the federal government established "988" as the new three-digit number for mental health crisis hotlines. Switching to an easy-to-remember 988 as the "911" for suicide prevention and mental health crisis services will ensure Americans in crisis have access to the help they need. 988 will connect callers with around-the-clock intervention, including mobile crisis support teams staffed by mental health professionals and trained peers instead of police officers.

With calls to existing suicide prevention call centers skyrocketing as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic - including by 8,000 percent at one Los Angeles-based call center - AB 988 will ensure the state is prepared to answer the calls of all Californians in need.

The current mental health crisis response system relies on law enforcement and puts people suffering from mental illness through an expensive and traumatizing revolving-door as they shuttle between jails, emergency rooms, and the street. A comprehensive crisis response system can prevent these tragedies, save money, and increase access to appropriate care.

AB 988 takes a monumental step forward in addressing these systemic inequities in our mental health system by creating a crisis response system that provides support to help individuals and communities thrive.

For these reasons, the California State Association of Psychiatrists strongly supports AB 988. Thank you for your authorship of this critical measure.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Yoder', is placed below the word 'Sincerely,'.

Paul J. Yoder
Legislative Advocate

CC: Chair & Members, Assembly Health Committee
Chair & Members, Assembly Communications & Conveyance Committee

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