



The Cutting Edge

MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION IN NJ

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS UPDATE

Carolyn Beauchamp, President and CEO

New Jersey Is One Step Closer to a Full Continuum of Crisis Care: 988 Becoming a Reality

MHANJ is pleased to announce that bill **S311/A2036** (establishes a statewide behavioral health crisis system of care) is progressing through the New Jersey legislature. As of June 25th, S311 has been passed unanimously by the State Senate and A2036 is scheduled for Assembly vote on June 29th. It is anticipated that the bill will be making its way onto Governor Murphy's desk for his signature and final approval.

We wanted to remind all about the importance of this bill and to alert you of the critical need to fund community-based crisis care. **We would like you to take IMMEDIATE action to ask Governor Murphy to sign S311/A2036 into law and to fund the 988 line and mobile crisis teams.**

In 2020, the National Suicide Hotline Designation Act instituted 988 as the new three-digit phone number for the National Suicide Prevention Line (NSPL). Since then, MHANJ has advocated on behalf of New Jersey residents to establish the 988 line in New Jersey and create a much-needed behavioral health mobile crisis system within the state.

S311 establishes two key entities in New Jersey: the 988 line and mobile crisis teams. Together, they will help to fill the gaps that currently exist in our state's system of community crisis care. The 988 line will provide residents experiencing suicidal or behavioral health crises with "someone to call", while mobile crisis response teams will provide "someone to respond".

New Jersey's need for behavioral health crisis care has never been greater. Our state currently demonstrates record-high numbers of adults and youth with unmet behavioral health needs coupled with long and discouraging wait times for outpatient treatment. The elements of the crisis care system proposed by S311/A2036 are evidence-based, best practice solutions to our state's growing need for behavioral health crisis care.

We can do better for our residents. This legislation is giving New Jersey the chance to revolutionize our system of crisis care at a time when it is needed most. By connecting callers to support in real-time, providing support services over the phone and in-person as needed via mobile crisis teams, and engaging callers to follow-up care and connecting to services, 988 could be a no-wrong-door approach to accessing behavioral health care.



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It is the position of MHANJ that instituting mobile behavioral health crisis care throughout New Jersey will help to keep individuals in the community, out of hospitals and the criminal justice system, and to connect and engage individuals in behavioral health services. Our state needs 988 and the crisis continuum of care, and we need it now.

The Governor's FY23 budget contains \$12.8M to implement and fund the 988 crisis line for year one. User fees to fund the line have been removed from the legislation.

Mobile crisis teams still require funding. Community mobile crisis teams funding is on the consensus priority lists for both the Assembly and the Senate/Funding for community mobile crisis teams is a consensus priority for both the Assembly and the Senate. Senator Vitale has submitted a budget resolution for \$16M to support the creation of the community mobile crisis teams.

Thank you for your support of S311. Please contact Governor Murphy (<https://nj.gov/governor/contact/all/>) to ask that he sign S311/A2036 and to support funding for the 988 line and community mobile crisis teams to give New Jersey the crisis system for behavioral health care our residents need and deserve.

(Read Full Bills Here: [njleg.S311](#)/[njleg.A2036](#)).

The MHANJ is a statewide non-profit organization that strives for children and adults to achieve victory over mental health and substance use disorders.

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