

CRIS Updates (April 2023)

HB 1477 Committee Updates

The CRIS is meeting on April 26, 2023, 2:30-5:30pm. This meeting will focus on discussion of the youth crisis response system in Washington and key considerations to inform policy recommendations to improve.

Several subcommittees have also been convening to inform system recommendations, including the recent meetings below:

Date	Subcommittee	Topics of Focus
March 13	Lived Experience	Someone to Come
March 15	Tribal 988	Native & Strong Lifeline Someone to Come
March 28	Rural & Agricultural Communities	Someone to Come
April 10	Lived Experience	Youth Crisis Response
April 19	Tribal 988	Native & Strong Lifeline Someone to Come

Update: CRIS Workgroups

As discussed at the March CRIS meeting, two CRIS workgroups are convening: 1) Crisis Response Dispatch Protocols Workgroup, and 2) Crisis System & First Responder Collaboration Workgroup. The Crisis Response Dispatch Protocols Workgroup will review and provide input into draft crisis response dispatch protocols that have been developed by HCA and partners. The Crisis System & First Responder Collaboration Workgroup will focus on system goals and policy recommendations for collaboration between the behavioral health crisis response system and first responders. These recommendations will be brought forward to the CRIS and Steering Committee. Please reach out to Nicola Pinson (npinson@healthmanagement.com) with any questions about the committee and workgroup activities.

State Agency Updates

988 Implementation	<p>988 Call Volumes</p> <p>According to Vibrant Emotional Health, the national 988 administrator, Washington’s 988 crisis centers answered 5,720 calls statewide in March this year, slightly higher than previous call volume trends ranging from 4,900 to 5,400 per month. In addition, there were 264 calls to the Native and Strong Lifeline in March. The overall call answer rate in Washington meets the national performance benchmark.</p> <p>988 Crisis Center Implementation and Planning Group</p> <p>The Washington Department of Health convenes a 988 crisis center user group with Washington’s three 988 crisis centers. The April meeting focused on future meeting planning and agenda building.</p>
DOH Crisis Hub Rulemaking	<p>DOH is working to develop rules for the Crisis Call Center Hubs for adoption by November 2024. These rules will include Crisis Call Center Hub standards that then guide DOH’s contracts with the Hubs. DOH is moving forward with a Tribal Engagement Plan as part of the process to develop rules. As an early part of this plan, DOH has released ‘Dear Tribal Leader’ and ‘Dear Urban Indian Organization Leader’ letters to invite tribal partners to attend listening sessions that will be held at the end of May. The intent of these sessions is to provide opportunities for collaboration on the rule development geared specifically toward Tribal partners. Following these listening sessions, DOH will also be seeking CRIS Committee and Subcommittee input to inform the development of these rules.</p>

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Crisis System Technology Platform

Crisis System Technology Request for Information (RFI)

On March 23rd, the Crisis System Technology Platform Request for Information (RFI) was published, and DOH and HCA teams are formulating detailed responses to questions that vendors have posed. A second round of Q&A is also planned to allow opportunity to establish a comprehensive understanding of vendor questions and agency responses.

DOH and HCA teams also continue to track information regarding the pending release of the national Vibrant Unified Platform and the functionalities it can support to meet Washington's system requirements. Washington has also spearheaded creating and facilitating a monthly nationwide State Affinity Workgroup which is intended to provide a platform for states and territories to discuss successes, gaps, barriers, seek/give advice, and assist each other towards implementing 988 programs. To date, 44 states and 2 territories have been participating actively.

Crisis System Technology - Business Process Mapping with 988 Crisis Centers

HCA and DOH are engaging business process mapping discussions with the 988 Crisis Centers to identify needs for the future-state crisis call center platform. To inform this work, DOH and HCA staff participated in recent site visits to all three crisis centers to better understand the day-to-day workflow and processes for taking 988 and regional crisis line calls. This experience has been very helpful to see how workflow is managed currently, and gaps/barriers that need to be addressed in the future-state system. The HCA and DOH team will be reviewing the maps and sharing them with the crisis centers to review for accuracy. A small workgroup will then synthesize any gaps, determine common milestones, document similarities and differences, etc. The small workgroup will bring findings to the team and the crisis centers to start conversations around future state.

Crisis System Best Practice Guidelines

Crisis System Best Practices & Dispatch Protocols

HCA continues to hold monthly workgroup sessions with partners to develop the Crisis Response Best Practice Guidelines, due by July 1, 2023. The goal of the best practice guidelines is to standardize crisis response and incorporate SAMHSA's best practices into Washington as the infrastructure is built to support them. This guide will be shared with the CRIS Committee for review and input, and continuously updated to incorporate changes crisis system changes are rolled out.

As part of the Best Practice Guidelines, HCA is working with partners to develop protocols on when and how to dispatch crisis response resources. Partners engaged in the development of the draft protocols have included BH-ASOs, Co-Responder Outreach Alliance, Crisis Call Centers, First Responders, Mobile Crisis Teams, Military Department, Prenatal to 25 Strategic Advisory Group, Public Service Access Points, and the Washing State Department of Health. The goal is to create a comprehensive tool to help guide decision making for crisis contact centers when receiving a crisis contact. The CRIS Crisis Response Dispatch Protocols Workgroup will convene to provide review and feedback on the draft protocols (see CRIS updates above).

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Mobile Crisis Response Updates

Mobile Crisis Response Data Collection

HCA is working to implement changes to the behavioral health data system, including the development of a data dashboard to display and track data points. This work has included updates to the data collected about mobile crisis response services to support monitoring of services and future planning. All regions began reporting MCR data during the 4th calendar quarter of 2021. The current focus is on adding youth specific data elements, tracking law enforcement and co-responder involvement in crisis response, and identifying individuals who participate in in-home stabilization.

Mobile Response & Stabilization (MRSS) Youth Teams Update

HCA is working with the National MRSS Quality Learning Collaborative (QLC) leadership, including experts from Connecticut and the Child and Health Development Institute (CHDI), to provide technical assistance to support robust data collection in two regions (King and Thurston Mason) with existing Mobile Response and Stabilization Services (MRSS). Data considered will include youth and family specific data points such as referral sources, presenting problem, demographics, hospital and ED diversion, justice system diversion, maintaining home placements, and outcomes. This work will remain ongoing and will work to support data collection on youth across the state.

A System of Care (SOC) grant is also supporting work in two additional counties (Pierce and Spokane) to deliver MRSS services to fidelity. Every region in the state is building youth teams. HCA continues to sponsor a monthly MRSS workgroup for providers which is well attended.

Commercial Coverage of Crisis Services – Updates

Commercial Coverage of Emergency Crisis Services and Next Day Appointments

The Office of Insurance Commissioner (OIC) and HCA are working to implement changes to the current processes to connect individuals to next day appointments. A Next Day Appointment (NDA) directory is being developed and hosted by OneHealthPort. Testing of the new process will start in May.

A workgroup convened by OIC and HCA continues to meet to improve the process for people with commercial coverage to access Next Day Appointments from either a call center or mobile crisis team. This effort is addressing implementation challenges of the current process, including crisis workers' lack of access to information about enrollment or eligibility in commercial insurance. The workgroup also plans to address the lack of provider availability for NDAs, especially on the weekends. Ideas like a Partnership Access Line (PAL line) model or other pools of workers that plans can contract for that will hold appointments are being explored as potential solutions to address the appointment availability problem.

Commercial Coverage of Behavioral Health Emergency Services

The 1688 workgroup continues to work on implementing its recommendations to support processes to bill commercial carriers for behavioral health emergency response services. This includes development of the technical infrastructure to support access to enrollment and eligibility information and building out systems to support information sharing.