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Media Release: Governor Laura Kelly Signs Mental Health Intervention Hotline Legislation: What They're Saying

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GOVERNOR LAURA KELLY

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Governor Laura Kelly Signs Mental Health Intervention Hotline Legislation: What They're Saying

TOPEKA – Governor Laura Kelly signed bipartisan legislation, Senate Bill 19, creating the state's suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline and behavioral health intervention teams. The 9-8-8 hotline will be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to Kansans needing mental health emergency services. The hotline will launch July 16, 2022.

More information about SB 19 can be found [here](#).

Here's what they're saying:

“The Kansas Mental Health Coalition is celebrating the passage of 988 Behavioral Health Crisis legislation today! This is a crucial element of modernizing the Kansas Behavioral Health Continuum, providing meaningful suicide prevention and crisis assistance to Kansas families by assuring their calls are answered in Kansas by trained staff and covering some initial crisis interventions.”

– **Amy Campbell, Kansas Mental Health Coalition**

“9-8-8 will provide unprecedented access and timely responses to individuals in a mental health crisis. The passage and signing of this legislation marks the culmination of work done by mental health advocates including legislators and state officials that will help thousands of Kansans in a short amount of time.”

– **Kyle Kessler, Executive Director, Association of Community Mental Health Centers**

“The 9-8-8 number is part of a multi-agency effort that I have worked on with a bipartisan group of legislators and stakeholders for many years to improve access to mental health services. This new number is a tool that will help Kansans get in touch with the right people and resources as we continue to make Kansas’ mental health system the best in the country.”

– **Representative Brenda Landwehr, Chair of the House Committee on Health and Human Services and the 2021 Special Committee on Kansas Mental Health Modernization and Reform.**

“SB 19 is just the beginning. The Kansas Legislature has been looking at the issue of mental health services in depth with the Mental Health Modernization Task Force and 9-8-8 not only helps to provide timely support and access but it frees 9-1-1 to do quick emergency work. This is a lifesaving tool for Kansans.”

– **Senator Pat Pettey, Ranking Minority Member of the Senate Public Health & Welfare Committee and a Member of the 2020 Special Committee on Kansas Mental Health Modernization and Reform**

“Kansas hospitals know firsthand the importance of being able to access critically needed services for individuals facing mental health crisis. At a time when Kansas hospitals have seen the serious impacts of suicide in communities across our state, we applaud Kansas policymakers for funding and implementing the 9-8-8 suicide prevention hotline to help provide additional mental health crisis services to those in need.”

– **Tara Mays, Kansas Hospital Association**

“The passing and signing of SB 19 sets in motion the support system needed in our state for people in need, especially our youth, so they can weather some of the tough times in life and get the comprehensive help they need to set a healthy life course. I commend my legislative colleagues, state staff, mental health professionals and the Governor for putting the health and safety of all Kansans as a top priority.”

– **Senator Tom Hawk, Ranking Minority Member of the Senate Ways & Means Committee and Member of the 2021 Special Committee on Kansas Mental Health Modernization and Reform**

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