

# Massachusetts 988 Commission

Meeting Minutes  
December 15th, 2025  
1:30pm – 3:00pm

**Date of meeting: Monday, December 15th, 2025**

**Start time: 1:34 PM**

**End time: 3:04 PM**

**Location:** Virtual Meeting (Zoom)

Count	Members participating remotely	Vote 1	Vote 2	Vote 3
1	Danielle Bolduc – Director of the Suicide Prevention Program	A	O	X
2	Patrick Bowlin - Current or former consumer of mental health or substance use disorder supports or services	-	-	-
3	Kelly Casey, PhD – Department of Forensic & Clinical Services at William James College	-	-	-
4	Rebekah Caylor – Raynham Police Department (MCPA), 911 Dispatcher	-	-	-
5	Courtney Chelo – Mass. Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (MSPCC)	-	-	-
6	Undersecretary Kerry Collins – Executive Office of Public Safety and Security (EOPSS)	X	-	-
7	Rebekah Gewirtz – National Association of Social Workers - MA & RI Chapter	X	X	X
8	Debbie Helms – Samaritans Merrimack Valley	X	X	X
9	Jessica LaRochelle – Mass. Association for Mental Health (MAMH)	X	X	X
10	Josh Quirk – National Alliance on Mental Illness Massachusetts (NAMI-MA)	X	X	X
11	Charmain Jackman, PhD – InnoPsych, Inc.	X	X	X
12	Karin Jeffers – Clinical & Support Options (CSO)	-	-	-
13	Kathy Marchi – Samaritans, Inc.	X	X	X
14	Kimberly Martin – Riverside Trauma Center – Riverside Community Care	-	-	-
15	Paul Mina – United Way of Tri County & United Way of Pioneer Valley, Mass 211	X	X	X
16	Ivy Moody – Mental Health Legal Advisors Committee (MHLAC)	X	X	X
17	Pam Sager – Parent/Professional Advocacy League (PPAL)	-	-	-
18	Pata Suyemoto - National Asian American Pacific Islander Mental Health Association	X	-	-
19	Joan Taglieri - Cambridge Health Alliance	X	X	X
20	Mio Tamanaha – Department of Mental Health	X	X	X
21	Stacy Vail – Cataldo Ambulance Service, Paramedic	-	-	-
22	Monna Wallace – State 911 Department	X	X	X
23	Sam Langstein - Current or former consumer of mental health or substance use disorder supports or services	X	X	X
24	Chair Kelley Cunningham – Division of Violence and Injury Prevention, DPH	X	O	X

\* **(X)** Voted in favor; **(O)** Opposed; **(A)** Abstained from vote; **(-)** Absent from meeting or during vote

\*\* **Vote 1:** Roll Call and Minutes Approval; **Vote 2:** To schedule another meeting in January; **Vote 3:** To Adjourn Meeting

### **Call to Order and Opening Remarks:**

Chair Kelley Cunningham, Director of the Division of Violence and Injury Prevention at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, introduced herself and mentioned her designee as the Commission Chair. Kelley opened with some general housekeeping tips reminding the group that the meeting is subject to Open Meeting Law and that any votes taken during the meeting will be conducted via a roll call vote. Commission members should remain muted unless they are speaking, and to please not use the chat feature as it is not available to the public. Members are encouraged to use the raise hand feature for comments or questions and to state their names before speaking to record the minutes accurately and encourage accessible communications.

Kelley stated that the goal of today's meeting is to continue the discussion and review of the recommendations for the Annual report and continue voting on them. Kelley let the commission know that she would try to move the conversation along today given the number of recommendations we need to cover.

**November Meeting Minutes:** Kelley called for approval of the draft minutes from the last Commission meeting on November 17th, 2025.

Paul Mina introduced a motion to approve the November 17<sup>th</sup> minutes, and Kathy Marchi seconded the motion.

**Vote 1 on approval of the November meeting minutes:** The November 17th minutes were approved by roll-call vote.

### **988 Commission Statute:**

In addition to the meeting materials, members were sent the language of the 988 Commission Statute. To level set with the group what the charge of the 988 Commission is, Kelley shared her screen showing the summary points 1) and 2) of the statute and read them out loud. Kelley invited the members questions and comments. Based on the statute language, Kerry Collins asked that the group to consider continuing with the vote today on recommendations 7 through 11, which we've had since October, and tabling recommendations 12 – 18 for more discussion and exploration in 2026. Jessica LaRoche pointed out that the statute language shared on the screen was incomplete. Jessica agreed to follow up offline with Kelley with the missing text. Rebekah Gewirtz asked to be included in that follow-up, and Kelley encouraged the members to move on to the recommendations.

### **Continuation of the review of, and voting on, the Recommendations for the Annual Report:**

The recommendation discussion continued with #7, a recommendation for "Improved Interoperability" between 988, BHHL, the Mass Substance Use Helpline, and 911. Several members expressed that they were unlikely to put this forward as a recommendation this year, but they would like the opportunity to continue to explore this in 2026.

Ivy Moody noted that recommendation #12 "Establish an interagency workgroup chaired by EOHHS Office of the Secretary comprised of an adult peer representative with personal lived experience, a parent/caregiver peer representative with lived experience, a DPH 988 representative, a 911 representative, a 211 representative, a MA Substance Use Helpline representative, and a DMH BHHL representative to improve continuity, address consumer confusion, and incorporate line-user feedback" was meant to be discussed together with #7. Kelley stated that pushing both 7 and 12 forward as a single recommendation, or two recommendations would put the surcharge at risk. Kelley also raised that anyone who is part of a state agency needs to abstain from voting on recommendation #12.

It was also pointed out that when we had discussions on interoperability earlier this year it was concluded that there were already several things in place to continue to drive interoperability efforts.

## 7. Improved Interoperability

- Paul Mina called for a motion to table the discussion to 2026, and Kathy Marchi seconded the motion. The motion to table passed with 11 votes in favor of, 3 votes opposed, 1 abstained, and 9 members absent.

The commission members moved on to the next recommendation “Recommend surcharge again this year”.

Part of the discussion was discussing the similarities between this recommendation (#8) and #13, “Support language before the state Legislature which would provide for the establishment of a user fee on phone lines to create a dedicated trust fund for the 988 crisis and emergency response system or successor 988 and emergency response system.” Ivy Moody highlighted the importance of adding the successor language to the recommendation, but others were concerned we would either be rescinding the recommendation we put forward last year, or we would be invalidating it in some way.

Also discussed was the language of the recommendation we used in last year’s report to recommend the surcharge: “Draft a statute establishing a reasonable user fee amount for all phones within the commonwealth. Funding would be deposited into a trust fund designated specifically for 988 services and only to be used for 988 centers for phone, text, chat services or other 988 related services. The Department of Public Health will be responsible for maintaining and distributing funds.”

Ultimately the commission members did not want to put forth any changes to the previous recommendation but wanted to put forth a recommendation to endorse the previous recommendation again in this year’s report.

**8. The 988 Commission is again endorsing that legislators consider with urgency the establishment of a user fee as detailed in the 988 Commission’s 2024-2025 Annual Report. This recommendation serves as reinforcement of what we put forth in last year’s Annual Report and highlights the importance of having a long-term solution for funding.**

- Deborah Helms called for a motion to vote on recommendation #8, and Joan Taglieri seconded the motion. The recommendation passed with 10 in favor, 1 opposed, 4 abstained, and 9 members absent.

The commission members moved on to the next recommendation “Increase training to increase warm handoffs between 988 and BHHL”.

Part of the discussion was discussing similarities between this recommendation (#9) and #14, “Implement a policy of 988 call-taker ending each call with an offer to transfer the caller to the BHHL to facilitate access to follow-up-services as required by Mass. Gen. Laws ch. 177, § 16EE (c)(x) (2022), unless contra-indicated by the substance of the call.” However, it was also pointed out that these are two different things, #9 is about training and #14 is about policy change.

From a training perspective, Danielle Bolduc gave further context and details as to the mandatory training that already exists for 988 call takers. Call takers are educated on the full crisis continuum which includes BHHL, MCI, community-based health clinics, and 911, and when it is appropriate to make warm handoffs to each of those systems.

The commission members settled on tabling both #9 and #14 in the recommendations list for further discussion in 2026.

**9. Increased training to increase warm handoffs between 988 and BHHL.**

**14. Implement a policy of 988 call-taker ending each call with an offer to transfer the caller to the BHHL to facilitate access to follow-up-services as required by Mass. Gen. Laws ch. 177, § 16EE (c)(x) (2022), unless contra-indicated by the substance of the call.**

- Paul Mina called for a motion to table the discussion on these recommendations to 2026, and Deborah Helms seconded the motion. The motion to table passed with 15 votes in favor of, and 9 members absent.

At this point in the meeting, we ran out of time to continue discussing the rest of the recommendations (10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18). Members raised concerns with the overall process of addressing the recommendations, the facilitation of these meetings, and challenges with scheduling additional 988 Commission meetings.

Ivy Moody made a motion to have a January meeting and Rebekah Gewirtz seconded the motion. For the sake of time members voted on both the January meeting and to adjourn this meeting together.

**Next Steps:**

- Brenda-Liz will send out a calendar invite for a January meeting.
- A decision will be made on the new date for the February meeting.
- Casey Pratt took the action to articulate in the draft of the Annual Report what it means to table recommendations for 2026. In summary, the recommendations will guide the Commission's 2026-2027 agendas.

**January Commission Meeting and Adjournment:**

**Vote 2 (January meeting) and Vote 3 (to adjourn):** The motion made by Ivy Moody and seconded by Rebekah Gewirtz were both approved by roll-call vote (see detailed record of votes above).

**Appendix below:**

See voting by Commission member to date on the pages below.

**Voting on Recommendations 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 – Monday, November 17th**

<b>Count</b>	<b>Members participating remotely</b>	<b>Rec. 1</b>	<b>Rec. 2</b>	<b>Rec. 3</b>	<b>Rec. 4</b>	<b>Rec. 5</b>	<b>Rec. 6</b>
1	Danielle Bolduc	–	–	–	–	–	–
2	Patrick Bowlin	–	–	–	–	–	–
3	Kelly Casey, PhD	X	X	X	X	X	X
4	Rebekah Caylor	–	–	–	–	–	–
5	Courtney Chelo	X	X	X	X	X	X
6	Undersecretary Kerry Collins	X	X	X	X	X	X
7	Rebekah Gewirtz	X	X	X	X	X	X
8	Sharon Hanson	X	X	X	X	X	X
9	Debbie Helms	X	X	X	X	X	X
10	Jessica LaRochelle	X	–	–	–	–	–
11	Josh Quirk	X	X	X	X	X	X
12	Charmain Jackman	X	X	X	X	X	X
13	Karin Jeffers	O	X	X	X	X	X
14	Kathy Marchi	X	X	X	X	X	X
15	Kimberly Martin	X	X	X	X	X	X
16	Paul Mina	X	X	X	X	X	X
17	Ivy Moody	X	X	X	X	X	X
18	Pam Sager	X	X	X	X	X	X
19	Pata Suyemoto	X	X	X	X	X	X
20	Joan Taglieri	X	X	X	X	X	X
21	Mio Tamanaha	X	X	X	X	X	X
22	Stacy Vail	–	–	–	–	–	–
23	Monna Wallace	X	X	X	X	X	X
24	Sam Langstein	X	X	X	X	X	X
25	Chair Kelley Cunningham	O	X	X	X	X	X

**(X)** Voted in favor; **(O)** Opposed; **(A)** Abstained from vote; **(-)** Absent from meeting or during vote

**Recommendation 1:** Conduct a broad assessment of the anticipated or current impacts of Federal funding cuts and make a recommendation for increased resources – funding and staff support indicated. (approved)

**Recommendation 2:** Given the removal of the press 3 option, 988 Massachusetts leads a collaboration of GLAD, LGBTQ+ Youth Commission, and PFLAG and makes a recommendation for additional trainings for this community for the call centers and to reach out to the BHHL and organizations representing the LGBTQ+ community to identify needs, make recommendations, and work together on solutions. (approved)

**Recommendation 3:** Include budget for 988 text capability. (struck down)

**Recommendation 4:** Expand 988 cultural competency to serve to the Asian communities and how to talk about mental health and how to access services. (approved)

**Recommendation 5:** Increase marketing initiatives in western Mass. (approved)

**Recommendation 6:** Advance legislation that prohibits anyone from using AI to provide mental health and therapeutic decision making. Provide support to advance this bill and potentially an outline of where AI is and is not an appropriate use of technology. (tabled)

**Voting on Recommendations 7, 8, 9+14 – Monday, December 15<sup>th</sup>**

Count	Members participating remotely	Rec. 7	Rec. 8	Rec. 9+14
1	Danielle Bolduc	O	X	X
2	Patrick Bowlin	-	-	-
3	Kelly Casey, PhD	-	-	-
4	Rebekah Caylor	-	-	-
5	Courtney Chelo	-	-	-
6	Undersecretary Kerry Collins	-	-	-
7	Rebekah Gewirtz	X	A	X
8	Debbie Helms	O	X	X
9	Jessica LaRoche	X	A	X
10	Josh Quirk	A	X	X
11	Charmain Jackman, PhD	X	X	X
12	Karin Jeffers	-	-	-
13	Kathy Marchi	X	X	X
14	Kimberly Martin	-	-	-
15	Paul Mina	X	X	X
16	Ivy Moody	X	O	X
17	Pam Sager	-	-	-
18	Pata Suyemoto	X	X	X
19	Joan Taglieri	X	X	X
20	Mio Tamanaha	X	A	X
21	Stacy Vail	-	-	-
22	Monna Wallace	X	X	X
23	Sam Langstein	X	A	X
24	Chair Kelley Cunningham	O	X	X

**(X)** Voted in favor; **(O)** Opposed; **(A)** Abstained from vote; **(-)** Absent from meeting or during vote

**Recommendation 7:** Improved Interoperability (tabled)

**Recommendation 8:** The 988 Commission is again endorsing that legislators consider with urgency the establishment of a user fee as detailed in the 988 Commission’s 2024-2025 Annual Report. This recommendation serves as reinforcement of what we put forth in last year’s Annual Report and highlights the importance of having a long-term solution for funding. (approved)

**Recommendations 9 and 14:** Increased training to increase warm handoffs between 988 and BHHL. **AND** Implement a policy of 988 call-taker ending each call with an offer to transfer the caller to the BHHL to facilitate access to follow-up-services as required by Mass. Gen. Laws ch. 177, § 16EE (c)(x) (2022), unless contra-indicated by the substance of the call. (tabled)