

# Massachusetts 988 Commission

Meeting Minutes

March 16th, 2026

1:30pm – 3:00pm

**Date of meeting: Monday, March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2026**

**Start time: 1:34 PM**

**End time: 2:57 PM**

**Location:** Virtual Meeting (Zoom)

Count	Members participating remotely	Vote 1	Vote 2
1	Danielle Bolduc – Director of the Suicide Prevention Program	–	–
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	X	X
5	Courtney Chelo – Mass. Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (MSPCC)	X	X
6	Undersecretary Kerry Collins – Executive Office of Public Safety and Security (EOPSS)	–	–
7	Rebekah Gewirtz – National Association of Social Workers - MA & RI Chapter	X	X
8	Debbie Helms – Samaritans Merrimack Valley	A	X
9	Jessica Laroche – Mass. Association for Mental Health (MAMH)	–	–
10	Jacqueline Hubbard – National Alliance on Mental Illness Massachusetts (NAMI-MA)	A	X
11	Charmain Jackman, PhD – InnoPsych, Inc.	A	X
12	Karin Jeffers – Clinical & Support Options (CSO)	–	–
13	Kathy Marchi – Samaritans, Inc.	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
16	Ivy Moody – Mental Health Legal Advisors Committee (MHLAC)	X	X
17	Pam Sager – Parent/Professional Advocacy League (PPAL)	X	X
18	Pata Suyemoto - National Asian American Pacific Islander Mental Health Association	X	X
19	Joan Taglieri - Cambridge Health Alliance	–	–
20	Mio Tamanaha – Department of Mental Health	A	X
21	Stacy Vail – Cataldo Ambulance Service, Paramedic	–	–
22	Monna Wallace – State 911 Department	X	X
23	Sam Langstein - Current or former consumer of mental health or substance use disorder supports or services	A	X
24	Chair Kelley Cunningham – Division of Violence and Injury Prevention, DPH	X	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 Adjourn the 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 stated to the Commission members and meeting attendees that the 988 Commission meeting will be recorded. Kelley reminded 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 are asked 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 thanked the commission members for attending and reminded everyone that we will use the time today to continue to vote on the remaining two recommendations and spend the rest of the time reviewing the draft Annual Report. Kelley welcomed Jacqueline Hubbard back to the 988 Commission. Jacqueline is from the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI-MA), and Josh Quirk had been filling her seat for the last six months.

Before getting to the recommendations, Kelley asked if everyone had received the February minutes and if there were any suggested edits. There was some confusion about whether the training session that took place in January should have been included in the February minutes. The answer was no given that one, it occurred in January and two, 988 Commission training sessions do not need to be included as part of the public record. No other changes or edits were raised by the Commission members for the February meeting minutes.

**February Meeting Minutes:** Kelley called for a roll call vote and approval of the draft minutes from the February 9th, 2026, Commission meeting. Paul Mina made a motion to approve the minutes, Kathy Marchi seconded the motion.

**Vote 1 on approval of the February meeting minutes:** The February 9<sup>th</sup> minutes were approved by roll-call vote.

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

Kelley shared her screen with the list of recommendations. The recommendation discussion continued with #17: "Require EOHHS to propose a multi-year action plan for the implementation of 988 Commission recommendations." At this time, Kelley also noted recommendation #18 "Develop a process and a schedule for working on committee recommendations" because of its similarity to #17 and suggested that the Commission might want to review these together.

Focusing on #17, Kelley informed the Commission members that EOHHS is not in charge of implementing commission recommendations, and that DPH is responsible for the implementation of 988 and determining if the Commission's recommendations are a fit for current plans and funding. Funding would also be a key component of executing a multi-year action plan. For transparency she added that the Governor's Budget level funded 988 for FY27 which supports 988 operations (including the centers) as they are today. Kelley opened it up to the floor for comments and questions.

The group discussed changing EOHHS to DPH, and the intent behind putting a recommendation like this forward. In summary, several members agreed that it is about accountability for the recommendations that the 988 Commission put forward including planning for budget allocation as needed. Further to these points the group discussed that 17 and 18 could be combined and edited. The language of recommendation #17 was edited and went to vote as follows.

**17. Require DPH to propose a multi-year action plan for the feasibility of implementation of 988 Commission recommendations.**

Pam Sager put forward a motion to vote on the recommendation and Ivy Moody seconded the motion.

The recommendation was approved with 14 votes in favor of, 0 opposed, 1 abstained, and 9 absent.

The group moved on to resolve recommendation #18 “Develop a process and a schedule for working on committee recommendations.” With the approval of #17 it was quickly noted that this recommendation is now redundant and Courtney Chelo volunteered to make a motion to strike #18.

At this point in the meeting, Casey Hall identified that Commission Member, Joan Taglieri, was in the waiting room, and Brenda-Liz Velez let her in to join the meeting as a panelist.

Continuing with #18, Kelley opened it up to the floor inquiring if there would be any further discussion. Pam Sager offered to be the second, and Kelley and Courtney clarified what the Commission is voting on. A in favor, is a vote in favor of removing the recommendation due to its redundancy.

### **18. Develop a process and a schedule for working on committee recommendations.**

Courtney Chelo put forward a motion to vote on the recommendation and Pam Sager seconded the motion.

The recommendation was removed with 16 votes in favor of, 0 opposed, 0 abstained, and 8 absent.

### **Review Draft Annual Report**

Below is a summary of the key discussions that took place during the review of the draft Annual Report, and Commission member feedback.

**Slide 8** – including or excluding the term “budgetary” under 988 Commission objectives: The 988 Commission is responsible for providing ongoing strategic oversight and guidance in all matters regarding 988 service and make recommendations for any **budgetary**, legislative, or regulatory changes that may be necessary for 988 implementation and funding that may include the establishment of user fees.

- Courtney Chelo shared her opinion that budget is legislative and therefore she believes it makes sense to add “budgetary” and cited recommendation #7 that the Commission passed that recommends additional state funding to support her view.
- Rebecca Ashby maintained her recommendation to leave “budgetary” off because it looks like the language from the enabling statute.
- Kelley Cunningham shared that she would recommend not having “budgetary” as part of this sentence because it is redundant since legislative is budgetary.
- Kathy Marchi suggested that there might be another place for it in the report, especially because the Commission would like to have input and recommendations that involve budget.
- Ivy Moody seconded Courtney’s statements and added that it is important to have language that reflects our concerns and interests for 988, and budget is a fundamental part of supporting 988.
- During this discussion it was also clarified that Rebecca Ashby is the DPH attorney supporting this Commission, and her recommendations are in support of this Commission’s work.
- Courtney Chelo also suggested that we wordsmith the Commission’s objective so that it is not so closely aligned to the language of the statute, which we already have on slides 4 and 5.

- Rebecca Ashby raised the concern that the legislature has determined the Commission’s objective so the objective should echo the statute, but that we might agree to add language on budget under the section Opportunities instead.
- The Commission agreed to put a pin in this conversation to give the group the chance to get through the entire draft report today. This was left as an open item.

**Slide 11** – Recommendation Rationale discussion. The Commission worked together to wordsmith and better define the rationale for the 10 recommendations put forward by the 988 Commission in the Annual Report.

- Rebekah Gewirtz suggested, with the consumer in mind, removing “sustaining the progress of previous years” and replacing it with “advancing the goal of making 988 as accessible as possible...”
- Pata Suyemoto suggested the addition to the above sentence highlighting “especially vulnerable populations”, since our recommendations this year have included specific vulnerable populations like Asian Americans and LGBTQ+.
- Courtney Chelo suggested sticking with high level language and action-oriented language with the addition of something along the lines of “the recommendations reflect the moment that we are in and reflect the needs of the populations that need support.”
- Joan Taglieri added support for keeping the rational in general, high-level terms.
- Charmain Jackman suggested we remove the first sentence that gave numerical details on how many recommendations we discussed this year, and how many passed because the numerical details do not have anything to do with rationale.

**Slide 62** – In the data slides, the Commission discussed the sentence: “Just over 3% of MA 988 calls require connection to higher level of care at either the MA Behavioral Health Help Line, the Mobile Crisis Intervention program, or Emergency Medical Services (911). 988 Lifeline is a 24/7, free, and low barrier service that forms the foundation of right-sized mental health care and support approaches while successfully diverting interactions away from unnecessary and costly higher levels of care and harmful or deadly interactions with emergency services.”

- Rebekah Caylor added a comment suggesting we remove the language “and harmful or deadly interactions with emergency services” ending the sentence at “higher levels of care”. Rebekah feels this sends the wrong message about first responders and noted that first responders are trained on the Graves use of force model.
- Pam Sager stated that she would be okay with the change but wanted to say that police have not been properly trained to de-escalate when it comes to severe mental health.
- Charmaine Jackman added that we have evidence there has been deadly force by first responders in Massachusetts, and we should include these outcomes particularly if it leads to better training.
- Courtney Chelo added that from an equity standpoint it makes sense to keep the language as is especially since the jail diversion program may be getting cut from the state budget.
- Ivy Moody supports some alternative language like “adverse reactions” that still highlights the importance of the statement.
- Rebekah Caylor could support alternative language but noted that deadly outcomes are a very small percentage of the calls taken annually.
- Kelley Cunningham noted that this is a tough one to get consensus on because it affects each of differently in its wording and intent. She reminded the group that the point of 988 is trying to avoid costly high levels of care and these kinds of confrontations.
- Charmaine Jackman stated that she is insistent that we be plain in our language and not change it is clear what we are talking about.

- Rebekah Caylor thinks that the phrase “deadly interactions” make it sounds like it is happening at a high rate.
- Mio Tamanaha added that it is important to highlight that these systems are trying to divert from the 911 pathway.
- Courtney Chelo appreciates the perspectives shared in this discussion, and suggests we try to agree on additional language adding that there is value in not being euphemistic when it comes to violence.
- Kelley Cunningham encouraged the group to end the discussion here for now, noting that it remains unresolved and we will revisit it again later.

**Slides 64 and 65 – Plans for the year ahead.**

- Kelley Cunningham noted that we need to spend time reviewing the tabled recommendations and prioritize the meeting agendas for the year ahead.
- Ivy Moody suggested that the Commission use some of the time in the April meeting to discuss meeting monthly in 2026 so we have enough time to accomplish our goals.

**Conclusion of the Meeting**

Kelley will take the feedback and discussion points on the draft Annual Report and work offline to make some suggestions back to the Commission in the form of the next draft Annual Report review.

The next 988 Commission meeting will be held on April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2026, from 1:30 PM to 3:00 PM ET. Ideally the April meeting will get the Commission to a vote on the Annual Report, and a planning discussion on the year ahead.

**Adjournment:**

**Vote 2 to adjourn:** A motion to adjourn was made by Courtney Chelo and seconded by Rebekah Caylor and approved (see detailed record of votes above).

**Appendix:**

See voting on the recommendations by each Commission member on the pages below.

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

Count	Members participating remotely	Rec. 1	Rec. 2	Rec. 3	Rec. 4	Rec. 5	Rec. 6
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>**

Coun	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 Larochelle	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)

**Voting on Recommendations 10 and 11 – Thursday, January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2026**

Count	Members participating remotely	Rec. 10 (to include)	Rec. 10 (language)	Rec. 11
1	Danielle Bolduc	O	X	X
2	Patrick Bowlin	-	-	-
3	Kelly Casey, PhD	-	-	-
4	Rebekah Caylor	O	X	X
5	Courtney Chelo	X	X	X
6	Undersecretary Kerry Collins	-	-	-
7	Rebekah Gewirtz	X	X	X
8	Debbie Helms	-	-	-
9	Jessica Larochelle	X	X	X
10	Josh Quirk	X	X	X
11	Charmain Jackman, PhD	X	X	X
12	Karin Jeffers	X	X	X
13	Kathy Marchi	-	-	-
14	Kimberly Martin	O	X	X
15	Paul Mina	O	X	X
16	Ivy Moody	X	X	X
17	Pam Sager	-	X	X
18	Pata Suyemoto	O	X	X
19	Joan Taglieri	-	-	-
20	Mio Tamanaha	A	X	A
21	Stacy Vail	X	X	-
22	Monna Wallace	-	-	-
23	Sam Langstein	A	X	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 10:** The first vote on recommendation 10 was to decide whether the recommendation should be included in this year’s Annual Report. (approved)

**Recommendation 10:** The second vote on recommendation 10 was on the language of the recommendation “The 988 Commission recommends that the Commonwealth has a publicly facing data dashboard for 988.” (approved)

**Recommendation 11:** The Commission recommends additional state funding to support trainings noted in recommendation #2. (approved)

**Voting on Recommendations 12, 13, 15 + 16 – Monday, February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2026**

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

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

**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, MAMH representative, PPAL representative, and a DMH BHHL representative to improve continuity, address consumer confusion, and incorporate line-user feedback. The working group shall explore steps to a single community facing number or integration of crisis and emergency response systems, services in alignment with the national 988 vision, and the three pillars of someone to call, someone to respond, and somewhere to go. (approved)

**Recommendation 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. (opposed)

**Recommendation 15+16:** Establish and or improve system-wide methodologies for comprehensive data collection, including line-user feedback gathering for the 988 system. Require public posting of anonymized data. (approved)

**Voting on Recommendations 17 and 18 – Monday, March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2026**

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

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

**Recommendation 17:** Require DPH to propose a multi-year action plan for the feasibility of implementation of 988 Commission recommendations. (approved)

**Recommendation 18:** Develop a process and a schedule for working on committee recommendations. (struck down)