

Massachusetts 988 Commission

Meeting Minutes
November 17th, 2025
1:30pm – 3:00pm

Date of meeting: Monday, November 17th, 2025

Start time: 1:34 PM

End time: 3:03 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	A	X
4	Rebekah Caylor – Raynham Police Department (MCPA), 911 Dispatcher	–	–
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)	A	X
7	Rebekah Gewirtz – National Association of Social Workers - MA & RI Chapter	X	X
8	Sharon Hanson – Mass. Behavioral Health Partnership (MBHP)	X	X
9	Debbie Helms – Samaritans Merrimack Valley	–	X
10	Jessica LaRochelle – Mass. Association for Mental Health (MAMH)	X	–
11	Josh Quirk – National Alliance on Mental Illness Massachusetts (NAMI-MA)	X	X
12	Charmain Jackman, PhD – InnoPsych, Inc.	X	X
13	Karin Jeffers – Clinical & Support Options (CSO)	A	X
14	Kathy Marchi – Samaritans, Inc.	A	X
15	Kimberly Martin – Riverside Trauma Center – Riverside Community Care	X	X
16	Paul Mina – United Way of Tri County & United Way of Pioneer Valley, Mass 211	X	X
17	Ivy Moody – Mental Health Legal Advisors Committee (MHLAC)	X	X
18	Pam Sager – Parent/Professional Advocacy League (PPAL)	X	X
19	Pata Suyemoto - National Asian American Pacific Islander Mental Health Association	X	X
20	Joan Taglieri - Cambridge Health Alliance	A	X
21	Mio Tamanaha – Department of Mental Health	X	X
22	Stacy Vail – Cataldo Ambulance Service, Paramedic	–	–
23	Monna Wallace – State 911 Department	X	X
24	Sam Langstein - Current or former consumer of mental health or substance use disorder supports or services	A	X
25	Chair Kelley Cunningham – Division of Violence and Injury Prevention, DPH	X	X

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

** **Vote 1:** Roll Call and Minutes Approval; **Vote 2:** 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. 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 noted that today's meeting was an extra scheduled session and thanked everyone for being here. She reminded the Commission members that they have been provided with a copy of the agenda, a copy of draft recommendations, and a copy of the October meeting minutes. She explained that we collected additional recommendations and feedback in the draft recommendations document earlier this month in preparation for this meeting. Kelley stated that the goal of today's meeting is to review the recommendations and vote on them.

Member Updates:

Kelley welcomed new member Sam Langstein who is filling the last Consumer seat. Sam introduced himself as an experienced consumer and peer in a variety of mental health settings. Sam is also a Social Worker in an inpatient psychiatry unit in Boston, and before that was the Director of the helpline at the National Alliance on Mental Illness in New York City. Kelley asked the Commission members to introduce themselves to Sam as we go through roll call and approval of the October meeting minutes.

Kelley also announced that Sharon Hanson is leaving the Mass Behavioral Health Partnership (MBHP) and that this is her last meeting with the Commission. She thanked Sharon for her service and her time on the 988 Commission. Sharon thanked the group and let Kelley know that she would be working on filling her seat before she leaves.

October Meeting Minutes: Kelley called for approval of the draft minutes from the last Commission meeting on October 20th, 2025.

Paul Mina introduced a motion to approve the October 20th minutes and both Sharon Hanson and Jessica LaRochelle seconded the motion.

Vote 1 on approval of the October meeting minutes: The October 20th minutes were approved by roll-call vote.

Review of, and voting on, the Recommendations for the Annual Report:

Discussion among the Commission members resulted in the first recommendation "Counter Cuts at the Federal Level" becoming two separate recommendations that will be put forward in the Annual Report.

- 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.**
- 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.**

- Debbie Helms called for a vote on recommendation #1, and Kerry Collins seconded the motion. The recommendation passed with 19 votes in favor of, 2 opposed, and 4 members absent.
- Rebekah Gewirtz called for a vote on recommendation #2, and Courtney Chelo seconded the motion. The recommendation passed with 20 votes in favor of, 0 opposed, and 5 members absent.

Regarding recommendations #1 and #2, the Commission members discussed who/what organization would undertake the recommended tasks. Ultimately, most members agreed that it was more important to present the recommendations to the legislators as the 988 Commission's job, without necessarily assigning a specific responsible party.

There was a short discussion on next recommendation: "Include budget for 988 text capability", and the Commission learned that there has already been budget set aside for this, and a text and chat pilot has been announced and will commence soon.

- Paul Mina called for a move to strike this recommendation, and Karin Jeffers seconded the motion. The motion to strike passed with 20 votes in favor of, 0 opposed, and 5 members absent.

The commission members discussed the next draft recommendation "Expand our 988-marketing campaign to Asian language communities." They agreed that building the capacity to serve this community with the right cultural competencies was the key component and agreed to change the language of the recommendation to better convey the intention.

3. Expand 988 cultural competency to serve the Asian communities and how to talk about mental health and how to access services.

- Pata Suyemoto called for a vote on recommendation #3, and Sharon Hanson seconded the motion. The recommendation passed with 20 votes in favor, 0 opposed, and 5 members absent.

The commission members discussed the next recommendation: "Increase marketing initiatives in western Massachusetts." Some discussion and disagreement ensued on whether the Commission could or should recommend changes to the 988-call script even though accreditation policy dictates the call script. To move the conversation forward, the Commission parked the call script discussion and separately called for a 2026 discussion on assessing the efficacy of our marketing strategy. There was further discussion on the 988 Commission overall process and how we arrive at making appropriate recommendations, and whether we need more time for these meetings. Getting back to recommendation #4, the Commission did not make any edits to the language and proceeded with the vote.

4. Increase marketing initiatives in western Massachusetts.

- Debbie Helms called for a vote on recommendation #4, and Joan Taglieri seconded the motion. The recommendation passed with 20 votes in favor, 0 opposed, and 5 members absent.

The next recommendation under discussion was the proposal to: "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." While there was general agreement that a recommendation on AI would emphasize that AI is not used to replace human interactions or act in any capacity as a provider of 988 services, it was decided to table this recommendation discussion until 2026. The decision acknowledged that this is a complex topic and requires additional research before a definitive recommendation can be made.

- Karin Jeffers called for a motion to table the discussion for 2026, and Paul Mina seconded the motion. The motion to table passed with 20 votes in favor of, 0 opposed, and 5 members absent.

December 15th Meeting:

The 988 Commission will continue to review the remaining recommendations and continue voting on whether to include them in the Annual Report during the December 15th meeting. Since we have not finished this process there will not be a draft Annual Report to review until we are through with the recommendations. The timeline for the Annual Report will be discussed at the December meeting.

Next Steps:

- Brenda-Liz will see about extending the December meeting to two hours.
- Per request, the 988 Statute will go out to the Commission members over email so that it can be read prior to the December 15th meeting.

Adjournment:

Vote 2 to adjourn: A motion to adjourn was made by Karin Jeffers and seconded by Kerry Collins and approved by roll-call vote (see detailed record of votes above).

Chat message captured in the meeting:

Jessica LaRochelle announced in the meeting chat that she is leaving at 2 PM for another commitment.