

988 Coordinating Council

Friday, March 8, 2024

9am - 12pm

Meeting Notes

Meeting Materials: Agenda, 988 Broad State Metrics, Budgets vs. Actual, 2024 Annual Report

Agenda

- 9:00am Welcome
- 9:10am Funding for Chat & Text Expansion
- 10:00am Wyandot Behavioral Health Network Call Center Update
- 10:50am Break
- 11:00am Other Matters
- 11:50am Next Steps

Attendees

KDADS: Chair Andy Brown (in person); Laura Brake (virtual); Allyson Sanders (virtual); Drew Adkins (virtual)

Council Members

In person: Nick Wood, Associate Director of InterHab; Monica Kurz, VP of Policy & Prevention for Headquarters KS; Colin Thomasset, Chief Executive Officer at Wheat State Healthcare

Online: Gene Ward, Sheriff of Seward County; Patrick Fucik, National Director of State Government Affairs for T-Mobile; Russ Klumpp, Major/Bureau Chief of Topeka Police Department; Representative Brenda Landwehr

Speakers: Colene Medrano, Wyandot BHN

KHI: Hina Shah (virtual); Valentina Blanchard (in person); Shelby Rowell (virtual)

Other: Brooks Robertson, Headquarters KS

Funding for Chat & Text Expansion, Monica Kurz, Headquarters KS

- Monica emphasized the importance of funding for expanding 988 chat and text services, particularly noting the preference for text-based communication among younger demographics. Operational processes and staffing considerations were outlined, highlighting the intensity of text-based conversations and the need for structured engagement strategies for counselors. Challenges with follow-up communication and associated costs for implementing features like outgoing messages were addressed. Monica stressed the necessity of increased funding to meet growing demand and ensure effective support for individuals in crisis. Budget considerations, including technology platform costs and messaging fees, were discussed, along with potential cost-saving strategies. The importance of strategic staffing and further discussion to determine exact funding requirements for the expansion of the program was emphasized. *Presentation slides are available.*
- Discussion/Questions:
 - **Outgoing Texts:** Questions were raised about the costs associated with sending outgoing follow-up texts. Currently, Vibrant does not have the technological capability to provide this service. Additionally, there would be a per-message fee as well as costs associated with the number sending messages out (short code or toll free) and emojis. A

question was raised about the ability to use a follow-up number for the entire state or per organization. It was determined that the focus should be on full answering capacity before expanding funding for follow-up texts.

- **KPI Reporting:** Discussion included KPI reports not showing interactions that never make it to the Headquarters queue, making the broad state metrics report different than what is pulled by the organization. This makes it hard to determine staffing needs as there is not an accurate account of the volume of texts and chats coming in.
- **Remote Workforce:** Discussion was held about the challenges related to hiring remote workers to staff chat and text lines and competing with other states' salary offers.
- **Measuring Progress:** Questions were raised about the timeline expected to get chat and text numbers to the 90% answer rate. With 2 additional staff members starting, progress is expected to be seen in 3 months to 1 year.
 - **ACTION ITEM:** KHI to complete environmental scan to explore salary and training requirements of surrounding states for 988 chat and text positions.
 - **ACTION ITEM:** Monica Kurz to provide update at next Council meeting to compare with environmental scan.

Wyandot Behavioral Health Network Call Center Update, Colene Medrano

- Colene provided an update on the progress of the Wyandot Behavioral Health Network Call Center, noting a 14-month journey toward becoming a 988 call center. The call center's physical space is currently being built out, with furniture delivered and installation underway. Delays in launching the call center stemmed from the need to upgrade outdated phone systems, which have now been completed and are undergoing testing. Staffing for the call center has been a priority, with hiring efforts initiated since January, aiming for a go-live date of April 22. The call center has hired 9 staff members, with a few more positions still open for weekend or night shifts. Training for staff includes mental health first aid, queues, case management, peer support, and various other topics to prepare for the demands of the role. IT-related challenges, such as phone system upgrades and reporting systems, have been encountered, but support from Vibrant Emotional Health has been prompt and helpful.
- Discussion/Questions:
 - **Launch Date:** A question was raised about the launch date if hiring is not complete by April 22. While confident that there will be enough staff hired for 24/7 coverage, the call center is open to a soft launch with the hours staff is available.

Other Matters

- **Annual Report Update** - The annual report was presented to the legislature in January and received positive feedback about the content.
- **Priorities for 2024** - The Council discussed topics they would like to explore including:
 - Approve SFY 2025 budget (May meeting)
 - Chat and text (review data at May meeting, make decisions about funding at July meeting)
 - Operational differences between call centers (July meeting)
 - Update from SAMHSA on 988 messaging (grant meeting in May, may have updates after)
 - EMS collaboration, CMS ET3 program as it applies to rural areas and impact on crisis support by EMS (summer meeting)
 - Geo-routing (early to late fall meeting)

- **ACTION ITEM:** Andy to reach out to Vibrant and SAMHSA regarding timeline and updates on geo-routing)
 - 911 and non-emergency line transfers to 988 network (fall meeting)
 - Sustainable funding follow-up (fall meeting)
- **988 Capacity Grant** - as part of the 988 capacity grant, a supplemental grant was obtained, requiring an RFP process to select a vendor. A vendor has been approved, and OPC is contracting with them to conduct a landscape analysis to identify needs, gaps, and barriers in the system. Laura Brake, KDADS, expressed hope that the vendor would attend the next call center meeting to discuss their findings and help strategize on statewide needs and connections. The scope of work for the contract focuses on developing partnerships to ensure streamlined access to mobile crisis and crisis teams through 988. There may be an opportunity to hear from the vendor at the July Council meeting.
- **RFI Update** – an RFI has not been published yet to explore software platforms. Netsmart has recently purchased a new mobile crisis platform and will be meeting with the call centers. At this time, the Council will wait to see if there is any interest from the call centers.

Next Steps

- The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 14 from 9am – 12pm.
- After the May meeting, meetings will be held on the 3rd Tuesday, every other month.

ACTION ITEMS:

- KHI to complete environmental scan to explore salary and training requirements of surrounding states for 988 chat and text positions.
- Monica to provide update at next Council meeting to compare with environmental scan.
- Andy to reach out to Vibrant and SAMHSA regarding timeline and updates on geo-routing)