

By: Representatives Felsher, Mickens

To: Public Health and Human Services

HOUSE BILL NO. 732

1 AN ACT TO PROVIDE LEGISLATIVE INTENT REGARDING COMPLIANCE  
 2 WITH THE NATIONAL SUICIDE HOTLINE DESIGNATION ACT OF 2020 TO  
 3 ASSURE THAT ALL MISSISSIPPIANS RECEIVE A CONSISTENT LEVEL OF 9-8-8  
 4 AND CRISIS BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES NO MATTER WHERE THEY LIVE,  
 5 WORK OR TRAVEL IN THE STATE; TO CREATE THE STUDY COMMISSION ON THE  
 6 9-8-8 COMPREHENSIVE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CRISIS RESPONSE SYSTEM; TO  
 7 PROVIDE FOR THE MEMBERS OF THE STUDY COMMISSION; TO PROVIDE THAT  
 8 THE STUDY COMMISSION SHALL ASSESS AND DEVELOP RECOMMENDATIONS FOR  
 9 CRISIS RESPONSE SERVICES AND FOR ADEQUATELY FUNDING THE CRISIS  
 10 RESPONSE SERVICES SYSTEM STATEWIDE TO SUPPORT THE SUSTAINABILITY  
 11 OF CALL CENTERS AND CRISIS SERVICES; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

12 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

13 **SECTION 1.** For the purposes of this act, the following words  
 14 and phrases shall have the meanings as defined in this section,  
 15 unless the context clearly requires otherwise:

16 (a) "National Suicide Prevention Lifeline" or "NSPL"  
 17 means the national program that operates the national suicide  
 18 prevention and mental health crisis hotline system;

19 (b) "9-8-8" means the universal telephone number for  
 20 the national suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline  
 21 system;



22 (c) "9-8-8 crisis hotline center" means a state  
23 identified and funded center participating in the National Suicide  
24 Prevention Lifeline Network to respond to statewide or regional  
25 9-8-8 calls;

26 (d) "SAMHSA" means the Substance Abuse and Mental  
27 Health Services Administration;

28 (e) "Mobile crisis response teams" include behavioral  
29 health professionals and peers that provide professional onsite  
30 community-based intervention such as de-escalation, stabilization,  
31 etc., for individuals who are experiencing a behavioral health  
32 crisis.

33 **SECTION 2.** It is the intent of the Legislature to:

34 (a) Save lives by improving access to appropriate  
35 services and supports to respond to behavioral health crises;

36 (b) Comply with the National Suicide Hotline  
37 Designation Act of 2020 and the Federal Communication Commission's  
38 rules adopted on July 16, 2020, to assure that all Mississippians  
39 receive a consistent level of 9-8-8 and crisis behavioral health  
40 services no matter where they live, work or travel in the state;

41 (c) Authorize the State Department of Mental Health to  
42 designate 9-8-8 crisis hotline center(s) that shall:

43 (i) Have an active agreement with the  
44 administrator of the NSPL for participation within the network;

45 (ii) Meet NSPL requirements and best practices  
46 guidelines for operational and clinical standards;



47 (iii) Report and participate in evaluations and  
48 related quality improvement activities;

49 (iv) Use technology, including chat and text, that  
50 is interoperable across emergency response systems used throughout  
51 Mississippi;

52 (v) Deploy crisis and outgoing services, including  
53 mobile crisis response teams, and coordinate access to crisis  
54 receiving and stabilization services and other local resources as  
55 appropriate and according to guidelines and best practices  
56 established by the NSPL;

57 (vi) Meet the requirements set forth by NSPL for  
58 serving high-risk and specialized populations as identified by  
59 SAMHSA, including training requirements and policies for  
60 transferring hotline callers to an appropriate specialized center  
61 or subnetworks within, or external to, the NSPL network;

62 (vii) Provide follow-up services to individuals  
63 accessing the 9-8-8 hotline consistent with guidance and policies  
64 established by the NSPL; and

65 (viii) Provide to the State Department of Mental  
66 Health and SAMHSA, as required, an annual report of the 9-8-8  
67 suicide prevention and behavioral health crisis hotline's usage  
68 and the services provided;

69 (d) Appropriate the funds needed for the first year of  
70 9-8-8 implementation and to make additional investments to enhance  
71 the crisis response system; and



72 (e) Maintain access to a statewide crisis system of  
73 care that is interconnected, effective and ensures a culturally  
74 and linguistically competent response to behavioral health crises.

75 **SECTION 3.** (1) There is created the Study Commission on  
76 the 9-8-8 Comprehensive Behavioral Health Crisis Response System  
77 to assess the statewide crisis response system and make  
78 recommendations to:

79 (a) Remove barriers to access behavioral health crisis  
80 services;

81 (b) Ensure that all residents receive a consistent and  
82 effective level of behavioral health crisis services no matter  
83 where they live, work or travel in the state;

84 (c) Adequately fund the crisis response services system  
85 statewide to support the sustainability of call centers and crisis  
86 services, looking at ongoing funding by Medicaid, federal and  
87 state revenue, or other funding sources;

88 (d) Propose strategies and policies for ongoing  
89 coordination with 911 and law enforcement; and

90 (e) Propose strategies for supporting investment in new  
91 technology to triage calls and link individuals to follow-up care.

92 (2) The study commission shall be comprised of the following  
93 members:

94 (a) The Executive Director of the State Department of  
95 Mental Health or his or her designee;



96                   (b) The State Health Officer or the Deputy Director of  
97 the State Department of Health;

98                   (c) The Mental Health Accessibility Coordinator or his  
99 or her designee;

100                   (d) The Executive Director of the Mississippi Emergency  
101 Management Agency or his or her designee;

102                   (e) The Commissioner of Public Safety or his or her  
103 designee;

104                   (f) The Executive Director of the Division of Medicaid  
105 or his or her designee;

106                   (g) The Chair of the Mississippi Public Service  
107 Commission or his or her designee;

108                   (h) The Chair of the Senate Public Health and Welfare  
109 Committee or his or her designee;

110                   (i) The Chair of the House Public Health and Human  
111 Services Committee or his or her designee;

112                   (j) The Executive Director of the Mississippi  
113 Association of Police Chiefs;

114                   (k) The Executive Director of the Mississippi Sheriff's  
115 Association;

116                   (l) The Director of the Mississippi Center for  
117 Emergency Services or his or her designee; and

118                   (m) A representative from the Mississippi Ambulance  
119 Alliance.



120 (3) The Study Commission shall meet within sixty (60) days  
121 after the effective date of this act, upon call of the Executive  
122 Director of the State Department of Mental Health, and members of  
123 the study commission shall meet at least two (2) times per year.

124 (4) Members of the commission shall not receive any  
125 compensation for serving on the commission.

126 (5) The study commission shall receive reports and updates  
127 from the 9-8-8 Planning Coalition and shall consult with the 9-8-8  
128 Planning Coalition to obtain any information necessary to perform  
129 a comprehensive study of the statewide crisis response system.

130 (6) On or before November 1, 2023, the study commission  
131 shall prepare and submit a written report of its findings and  
132 recommendations to the Mississippi Legislature and the Office of  
133 the Governor, together with any proposed legislation necessary to  
134 implement its recommendations.

135 (7) Upon presentation of its report, the study commission  
136 shall be dissolved.

137 **SECTION 4.** This act shall take effect and be in force from  
138 and after July 1, 2022.

