

Here's how FCC's new 988 helpline will benefit Massachusetts residents

Did you know that the Federal Communications Commission has designated 988 as nationwide suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline?

Massachusetts lawmakers Rep. Marjorie Decker (D) and Sen. Julian Cyr (D) filed separate bills to implement 988 in Massachusetts, H.2081, and S.1274. Decker said one of the goals with 988 is to take police out of the equation when someone is in need of mental health treatment.

The hotline which will go live on July 16th and replace the suicide hotlines is an easy-to-remember way to provide more opportunities to support residents in need of these services.

In Massachusetts alone, there will be five 988 call centers, all of which are members of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline Network: Call2Talk, Samaritans of Cape Cod & the Islands, Samaritans of Merrimack Valley, Samaritans, Inc., and Samaritans Southcoast.

By simply dialing 988 with a Massachusetts area code you will be routed to a counselor who is trained to help a person in crisis to focus on the stressful situation, treat their immediate needs, and teach them coping skills so they can handle the same or similar situations in the future.