



STATE OF MAINE  
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

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**Testimony of the Maine Public Utilities Commission,  
Emergency Services Communication Bureau**

**Neither For Nor Against**

**LD 1216, An Act to Improve Behavioral Health Crisis Services and Suicide  
Prevention Services**

May 15, 2025

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer and Distinguished Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services (Committee), my name is Maria Jacques, testifying neither for nor against the sponsor's amendment to LD 1216, An Act to Improve Behavior Health Crisis Services and Suicide Prevention Services on behalf of the Public Utilities Commission, Emergency Services Communication Bureau (ESCB).

LD 1216 codifies the definition of 9-8-8 in Maine law and modifies the definition of emergency medical dispatch services (EMD) and allows the transfer to 9-8-8 when clinically appropriate. This language does not leave room for centers to utilize their locally defined mental/behavioral health resources. As of November 2024, eleven EMD Centers reported that they utilize local mental or behavioral health resources. Additionally, calls are not transferred by dialing 9-8-8. Dispatch centers use a dedicated number to reach the Maine Crisis Line, the entity in Maine that answers 9-8-8 calls.

For several years now, the Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Behavioral Health (DHHS) and the ESCB have been working on the integration of crisis response into 9-1-1.<sup>1</sup> Both reports were submitted to the Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee.

More recently, Public Law 2023, Chapter 643 Part DDDD, Section DDDD-2 (page 212) requires DHHS to coordinate with the ESCB and the Department of Public Safety to ensure the coordination of services under the State's E-9-1-1 system and the State's 9-8-8 mobile crisis system. DHHS must submit a status report by January 30, 2026, along with any suggested legislation to both the Health and Human Services Committee and the Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee. Both Committees are authorized to report out a bill in the 2nd Regular Session of the 132nd Legislature.

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<sup>1</sup> Maine Crisis Protocol Report, February 2022  
Report on Crisis Protocol and Policy Working Group and Draft Legislative Language Pursuant to Resolves 2021,  
Chapter 162, February 2023

The Commission suggests that if there is no immediate need to codify the definition of 9-8-8, recommendations for how best to do so could be provided as part of the January 30, 2026, report. This would allow us to ensure the definition is aligned with the larger effort to deploy 9-8-8, as well as integrate 9-8-8 and other crisis response services into 9-1-1 that is ongoing.

I would be happy to answer any questions or provide additional information for the work session.