**BILL ANALYSIS**

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| Senate Research Center | H.B. 5342 |
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|  | Health & Human Services |
|  | 5/12/2025 |
|  | Engrossed |

**AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT**

Since its launch, the 9-8-8 lifeline has become a critical mental health resource, providing immediate life-saving support to individuals experiencing a mental health crisis. However, all five of Texas' 9-8-8 contact centers currently operate on limited federal grant funding, and as the demand for crisis services continues to grow, this funding alone is insufficient to ensure timely and effective responses for all Texans in crisis.

H.B. 5342 seeks to support 988 crisis contact centers by establishing a mechanism for state investment as well as obtaining information regarding current and future needs for the program.

H.B. 5342 amends current law relating to the provision of behavioral health crisis services, including measures to fund and support the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline and related services.

**RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

**SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS**

SECTION 1. Amends Chapter 547, Government Code, by adding Subchapter K, as follows:

SUBCHAPTER K. BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CRISIS SERVICES

Sec. 547.0551. 988 SUICIDE AND CRISIS LIFELINE TRUST FUND. (a) Defines "trust company."

(b) Provides that the 988 suicide and crisis lifeline trust fund (trust fund) is established as a trust fund outside the state treasury to be administered by the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC).

(c) Provides that the trust fund consists of gifts, grants, and donations, including federal funds, received by this state for the purposes of the trust fund and interest, dividends, and other income of the trust fund.

(d) Provides that money deposited in the trust fund is authorized only to be used to implement, maintain, or improve the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, including personnel and technological infrastructure improvements necessary to achieve operational and clinical standards and best practices as provided by the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline and pay the Texas Treasury Safekeeping Trust Company's (trust company's) expenses of managing the trust fund's assets.

(e) Requires the trust company to hold and invest the trust fund. Authorizes the trust fund to be invested with the state treasury pool and to be pooled with other state assets for purposes of investment.

(f) Provides that the overall objective for the investment of the trust fund is to maintain sufficient liquidity to meet the needs of the trust fund.

(g) Authorizes the trust company to acquire, exchange, sell, supervise, manage, or retain any kind of investment that a prudent investor, exercising reasonable care, skill, and caution, would acquire or retain in light of the purposes, terms, distribution requirements, and other circumstances of the trust fund then prevailing, taking into consideration the investment of all the assets of the trust fund rather than a single investment.

(h) Requires that the reasonable expenses of managing the trust fund's assets be paid from the trust fund.

(i) Requires HHSC at least annually, and more frequently as appropriate, to provide to the trust company a forecast of the cash flows into and out of the trust fund to ensure the trust company is able to achieve the purposes of this section.

(j) Prohibits the state from transferring or using trust fund assets for any purpose other than the uses provided in this section.

Sec. 547.0552. CRISIS CENTER ANNUAL REPORT. (a) Defines "crisis center."

(b) Requires HHSC to prepare an annual report of the usage of crisis centers in this state and the services provided by the centers.

(c) Requires HHSC to present the annual report to the legislature and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

SECTION 2. (a) Defines "commission."

(b) Requires HHSC, in collaboration with the Commission on State Emergency Communications and any other state agency HHSC determines appropriate, to conduct a study on the implementation of funding mechanisms to support the operation of the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, including an evaluation of the feasibility of establishing a service fee on telecommunication services.

(c) Requires that the study evaluate how the establishment of a telecommunication service fee or other funding mechanism will help implement, maintain, or improve the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, including providing for sufficient staffing levels, implementing technological improvements, and developing the capacity of the lifeline to respond to text messages and other online messages, enhance local response for crisis intervention services, and meet any increased demand on crisis intervention services as a result of any public awareness campaigns regarding the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.

(d) Requires HHSC, not later than December 1, 2026, to prepare and submit a report to the legislature on the findings of the study, including any recommendations for enhancing the crisis intervention services capacity of this state and an analysis of the efficacy of implementing a telecommunication service fee or other funding mechanism for the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.

(e) Provides that this section expires September 1, 2027.

SECTION 3. Effective date: September 1, 2025.