



# 2026 Legislative Session: Laws Impacting Behavioral Health

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# 2026 Legislative Session Behavioral Health Themes



Regulations and Standards for Recovery Houses



Data Integration



Coordinated Access to Care



Strengthening Stewardship of Behavioral Health Resources



Expanding Peer Support Across the Behavioral Health Workforce



Advancing Data-Driven Prevention for Suicide and Overdose



# Department Legislative Priorities



988 Florida Lifeline



Community Residential Beds



Short-term Residential Treatment Facilities



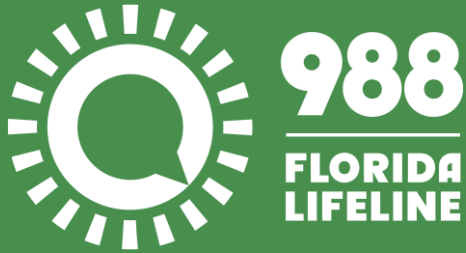
Patient Safety at State Mental Health Treatment Facilities



State Mental Health Treatment Facility Bed Capacity



# Strengthening State Oversight of 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline



Florida has 13 active 988 Florida Lifeline call centers that provide **free**, 24/7 behavioral health support across the state. Individuals experiencing suicidal thoughts, substance use, mental health crises, or emotional distress are connected to highly trained crisis counselors in their local area.

- HB 1091 codified the 988 Florida Lifeline as a core Department function and a key component of the coordinated system of care, with the Department providing oversight of call center operations.
- The 988 Florida Lifeline is supported through a blend of federal and state funding; however, the expiration of a key federal grant in 2026 would significantly impact workforce capacity and the ability to provide life-saving crisis services.
- The Governor's Recommended Budget supports \$9.6M to provide sustainability for Florida's 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.



# Short-term Residential Treatment Facility Expansion



SRTs provide short-term, intensive residential and rehabilitative mental health care in a structured, 24/7 environment.

- Individuals transitioning from acute inpatient care receive additional treatment and time needed to stabilize.
- This approach helps reduce inpatient lengths of stay and supports successful transition back into the community.
- The Governor's Recommended Budget supports \$11.6M in recurring General Revenue to expand capacity by 80 beds statewide, including 40 adult and 40 children's beds.



# Community Residential Beds



These beds will provide services comparable to the care provided by the department's state mental health treatment facilities (SMHTFs).

- Florida operates four Community Residential Treatment programs through Apalachee Center, Gracepoint, Henderson Behavioral Health, and LifeStream across key regions of the state.
- These programs provide community-based treatment for individuals involved in the forensic system under Chapter 916, F.S.
- Services are designed to treat and stabilize individuals in a community setting while supporting competency restoration. The programs help reduce commitments to state mental health treatment facilities and decrease jail recidivism.
- Individuals are connected to the appropriate level of care upon discharge to support ongoing stability and successful reintegration.
- The Governor's Recommended Budget supports \$10M to support 85 community residential treatment beds for preadmission diversion and discharge services through the Managing Entities' providers for patients committed under Chapter 916, F.S.



# Patient Safety at State Mental Health Treatment Facilities

- Recent surveys prompted comprehensive patient safety risk assessments using national standards from the New York State Office of Mental Health and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, identifying high-priority ligature risks in patient furniture and architectural fixtures.
- The Governor's Recommended Budget supports \$3.3M to implement anti-ligature improvements consistent with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and the Joint Commission regulations and standards.



- Video and audio surveillance will be used in treatment facilities to support monitoring of residents, staff, and visitors and to enable timely response to situations requiring assistance.
- The Governor's Recommended Budget supports \$2M to replace aging fiber-optic communication infrastructure, failing safety intercom hardware, and remedy a lack of crucial exterior cameras at two State Mental Health Treatment Facilities.



# State Mental Health Treatment Facility Bed Capacity



Between FY 2020-2021 and FY 2023-2024, facility commitments increased by over 60 percent, with facilities operating at or above 95 percent occupancy.

- Florida's population is projected to increase by more than 3.5 million residents by 2030.
- The number of individuals with mental illness is expected to rise to 39,995 by 2028.
- The Governor's Recommended Budget supports \$51M to decrease the forensic beds and civil beds wait lists by adding 474 new beds at two of the state-operated mental health treatment facilities.





**THANK YOU!**

