988 Crisis Care Continuum

Program/Project Overview

Washington State envisions a crisis call and response system that ensures people in crisis have access to an integrated system of consent-based, collaborative, and coordinated services that will be delivered via phone, text, or chat through the state's 988 Lifeline crisis centers, regional health services, and/or mobile response teams deployed in person whenever possible, and without unnecessary law enforcement. The 988 Crisis Care Continuum is a cross-agency project between the Department of Health (DOH) and Health Care Authority (HCA) to plan, implement, and expand the state's behavioral health crisis response and suicide prevention system, develop a Behavioral Health Integrated Client Referral System, and advance the use of interoperability platforms and tools within the behavioral health environment.

Highlights and major milestones:
- Feasibility study completed in 2024.
- Internal and external listening sessions were completed to gather feedback on technology approach in 2025.
- Minimum Viable Product (MVP) determined by project sponsors in June 2025.
- Working session with WaTech leadership to review technology recommendation in June 2025.
- Technology approach approved by G2 in June 2025.
- Agencies are currently drafting decision packages to support MVP.

Critical Risks and Issues
High-level summary of risks and issues.
- **Budget:** Funding from the 2025–27 Legislative Session was limited to planning expenses only, requiring the project to submit a decision package to secure implementation funding. The 25N tax line account is projected to be overspent within the next five years if the current tax rate remains unchanged and expenditures continue to grow as expected. Due to statewide budget shortfalls, General Fund-State (GFS) dollars are not available to support the project. Program and agency leadership continue to monitor the situation closely and are actively exploring strategies to stretch the 25N budget to accommodate the 988 technology project.
- **Staffing turnover/shortages:** Turnover in IT sponsorship in both agencies.

Consultation Needed
What feedback does the program or project need from the Board?
- What items should we consider in data migration, data conversion and data standardization with several external partners?

- Is there anything beyond what we shared that we should consider as we move forward with our technical decision based on your experience?