



## OFFICE OF RACIAL EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE


Marc Elrich  
County Executive

Tiffany Ward  
Director and Chief Equity Officer

### MEMORANDUM

January 9, 2025

To: Jennifer Bryant, Director  
Office of Management and Budget

From: Tiffany Ward, Director  
Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice 

Re: Racial Equity Impact Assessment (REIA) Supplemental Appropriation (SA) #25-16  
Department of Health and Human Services 988 Crisis Hotline Services (\$2,786,948)

- I. **FINDING:** Based on available information, Supplemental Appropriation #25-16 - 988 *Crisis Hotline Services* does not appear to substantively alter service offerings that began with Supplemental Appropriation #23-2 and continued in Supplemental Appropriations #23-59 & 24-9. Therefore, the Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice (ORESJ) finding remains unchanged:

*Supplemental Appropriation #24-9 988 Crisis Hotline Service is likely to continue creating a universal mental health care benefit in the County, as it allows for the maintenance of Lifeline/988 services. However, this supplemental appropriation is not likely to reduce racial disparities or inequities in mental health outcomes as it is not designed nor targets resources in ways that account for racially disparate trends in suicide rates or mental health risk factors and treatment access.*

- II. **BACKGROUND:** The purpose of SA #25-16 is to combine Federal (\$595,837) and State (\$2,191,111) grant awards to help cover operational costs, staffing needs, an information technology cybersecurity audit, and indirect costs associated with Lifeline/988 hotline services. This supplemental appropriation supports the ongoing contract with EveryMind, Inc., the County's provider of confidential and supportive mental health and suicide prevention hotline, as well as call, text, and chat support for adult and youth residents in the County.

Racial Equity Impact Assessment (REIA) Supplemental Appropriation (SA) #25-16 Department of Health and Human Services 988 Crisis Hotline Services (\$2,786,948)

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In July 2022, the Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice (ORESJ) conducted a racial equity impact assessment (REIA) of supplemental appropriation #23-02,<sup>1</sup> which pertained to the County's transition to 988 and utilization of EveryMind, Inc. as the hotline provider. In the REIA, ORESJ cited research showing how suicide rates differ by race, ethnicity, and other demographic characteristics (nationally and in the County). ORESJ also explained how reducing racial and other disparities in mental health outcomes requires keen attention to the ways systemic racism affects suicide risk factors as well as access to support services. Subsequently, REIA's #23-59<sup>2</sup> and #24-9<sup>3</sup> have also been completed on 988 Crisis Hotline Services and have not substantively altered our original assessment. Given that Supplemental Appropriation #25-16 builds upon Supplemental Appropriation #23-2 and does not substantively alter the services, ORESJ's analysis, and findings remain unchanged.

cc: Dr. James C. Bridgers, Jr., Director, Department of Health and Human Services  
Tricia Swanson, Director, Strategic Partnerships, Office of the County Executive

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ore/Resources/Files/23-02.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ore/Resources/Files/23-59.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ore/Resources/Files/24-9.pdf>