



**CLEAR
PATHWAYS**
An Initiative of Peg's Foundation

Scaling 9-1-1/9-8-8 Interoperability: Early Lessons and Ohio's Approach

Lunch & Learn

June 30, 2025



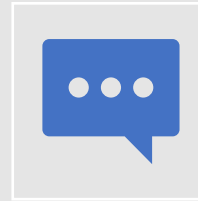
Housekeeping



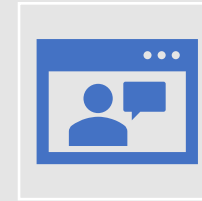
We'd love to know whose here!
Please introduce yourself using the chat function



Ask questions at any time using the Q&A function



Share your comments or "aha" moments via the chat box



A recording and sides will be available



Mission + Vision

- **Mission:** assist local, state, and national partners to accelerate implementation of best practice crisis response to reduce reliance on jails and hospitals, ensuring adults in behavioral health crises have a clear path to getting person-centered help
- **Vision:** for people experiencing behavioral health crises to have a path to help, across Ohio and the nation.





Topics

1

3-Part Series

Upcoming Webinars and Briefs

2

Scaling 9-1-1/9-8-8 Interoperability

Interoperability, Scaling, Crisis Response Pilot

3

Welcome Doug Jackson

Reflections on pilot, 988 mission and development

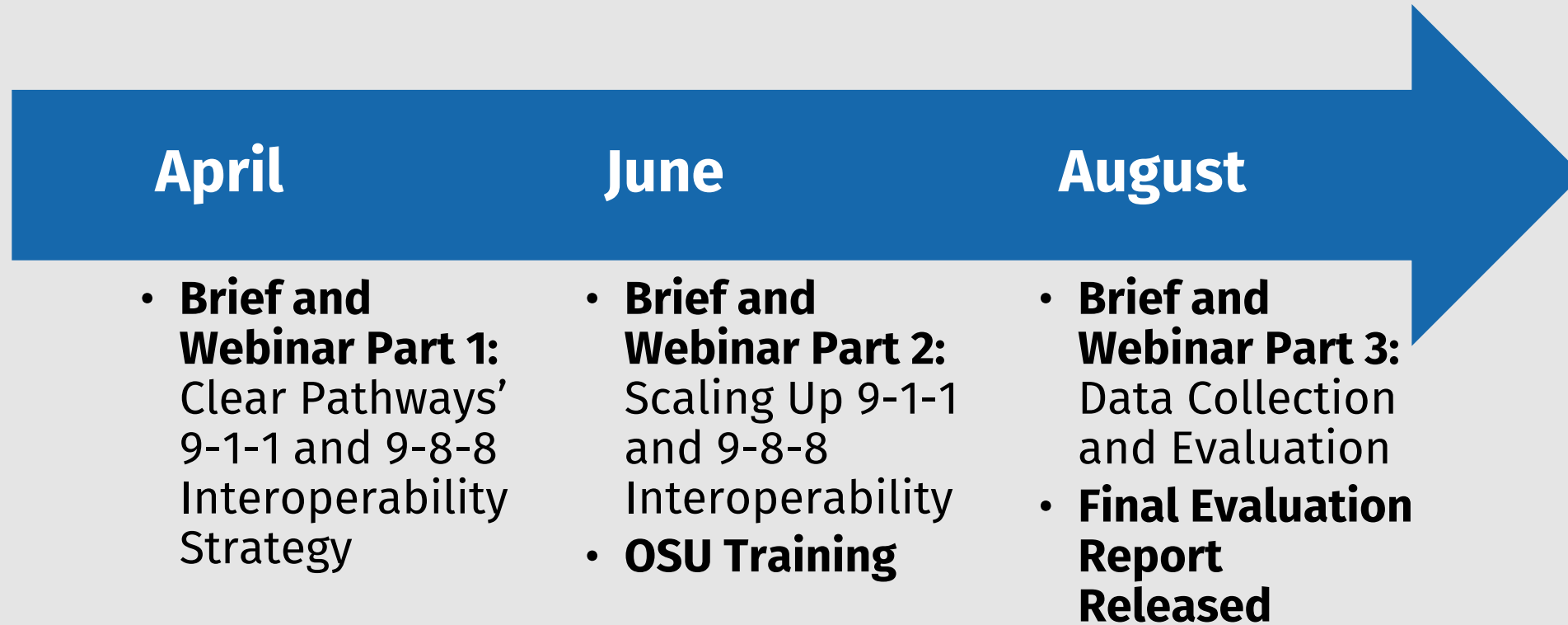
4

Scaling Recommendations and Q&A

Discuss recommendations and Ohio's approach



3-Part Series



Interoperability

Interoperability formalizes interconnectedness between systems so that the connection extends beyond simple coordination to include formal protocols, procedures, or agreements that allow for the transfer of calls between 9-1-1 and 9-8-8

(Brooks Holliday, 2024).



What is Scaling?

Scaling refers to the thoughtful expansion of proven solutions, aiming to reach a significant portion of those affected and sustain impact over time.¹

Clear Pathways Approach

- Build **scalable systems** that can adapt to emerging trends and shifts in the behavioral health landscape
- Prioritize solutions that are **flexible, sustainable, and rooted in local context**

Pilot to Systems

- Interoperability between **911 and 988** must move beyond isolated pilots
- We aim to establish a **coordinated system of care** that mirrors the consistency and structure found in fire, EMS, and law enforcement responses to crises





Crisis Response Pilot

Strategy Focus

Governance and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for warm transfers from 9-1-1 to 9-8-8

Pilot Participants & Timeline

12 months across 5 diverse Ohio sites, each minimally including: PSAPs, 9-8-8 call centers, behavioral health boards

Preliminary Findings

Strategy improvements that Clear Pathways will test with future sites to build evidence for interoperability best practices



Scaling Recommendations

Recommendations were informed by pilot participants, drawing on their roles in local and statewide crisis system development.



Advance interoperability through leadership approval



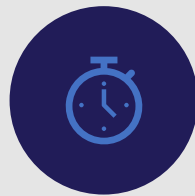
Expand funding and resources to support staff capacity



Prioritize technology investments



Improve behavioral health call identification by 911



Develop a behavioral health interoperability continuum



New Brief – Bringing 911/988 Interoperability to Scale



June 2025 | Crisis Response Pilot Brief 2 of 3

Bringing 911/988 Interoperability to Scale

By supporting 911 public safety answering (PSAPs) and 988 call center coordination, [Clear Pathways](#) is working to ensure that people experiencing behavioral health crises have a path to help across Ohio and the nation. Since 2022, Clear Pathways has developed and continuously refined an [Interoperability Strategy](#). This brief, the second in a three-part series, provides strategies for bringing 911/988 interoperability to scale.

What Is “Scaling”?

Scaling refers to the thoughtful expansion of proven solutions, with the goal of reaching a significant portion of those affected and sustaining impact over time.¹ Clear Pathways emphasizes building scalable systems that can adapt to emerging trends and ongoing shifts in the behavioral health landscape. When applied to 911/988 interoperability, this means moving beyond isolated pilot efforts toward a coordinated system of care. A coordinated system of care can respond to behavioral health crises with the same level of structure and consistency seen in fire, emergency medical services, and law enforcement responses.

Advancing Promising Practices

During the Crisis Response Pilot, Clear Pathways collaborated with five Ohio sites to develop or expand warm transfer² criteria from 911 to 988. This process revealed several shared challenges as well as new opportunities for how 988 may support 911 callers. To facilitate statewide scaling of 911/988 interoperability, we—with our partners at [Mathematica](#)—developed several recommendations to address these challenges.

National Support

It's ideal for local systems to be supported by national efforts. Federal agencies (e.g., the [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#) [soon to be part of the Administration for a Healthy America], [Federal Communications Commission](#)) and national organizations (e.g., [National Emergency Number Association](#), [National Council for Mental Wellbeing](#)) have developed standards and issued guidance to promote interoperability.

Challenges, Recommendations, and Anticipated Benefits

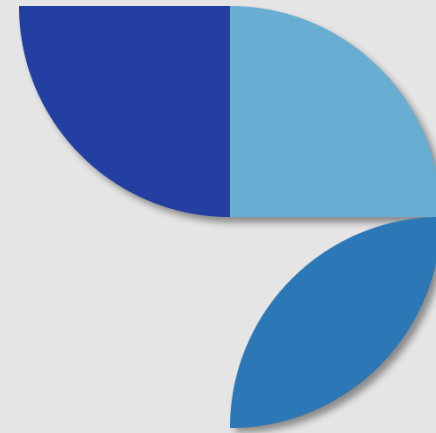
Challenge	Recommendation	Anticipated Benefits
Liability Concerns: Pilot sites reported spending significant time addressing liability concerns from transferring calls from 911 to 988. These concerns often centered on documentation requirements and hesitancy from PSAP personnel, who feared legal repercussions from transferring calls without clear guidance or protocols.	Develop Leadership Approval Processes: Advance interoperability efforts through formal leadership approval at the state or county level. Interoperability plans are more likely to succeed when senior officials explicitly authorize call transfers from 911 to 988 and clarify expectations around liability protections and documentation practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promotes consistent interoperability practices across jurisdictions• Reduces liability concerns for PSAP leadership and call takers• Establishes shared understanding of documentation protocols between public safety and behavioral health• Provides legal clarity around three-way calls and medical information redaction

¹ NYU Marron Institute of Urban Management. (n.d.). SCALE + Lab overview. marroninstitute.nyu.edu/projects/upcoming-programming

² A warm transfer occurs when “one employee answers a call and then transfers the call to a different employee or location and passes on any relevant information so that the caller doesn’t have to repeat themselves” National Emergency Number Association. (2025). *NENA standard for 9-1-1/988 interactions*. cdn.ymaws.com/www.nena.org/resource/resmgr/standards/NENA-STA-045.1-202Y_911-988.pdf



Advance interoperability through leadership approval



Challenge

- Liability concerns
- 911 call taker hesitance
- Unclear documentation expectations

Recommendation

- Secure leadership approval (county, state)
- Clarify SOPs and documentation protocols

Anticipated Benefits

- Builds confidence, buy-in, and consistency
- Reduces liability, risk, and confusion



Expand funding and resources to support staff capacity

Challenge

- Workforce Gaps (911, 988)
- Limited staff capacity to develop and test new procedures

Recommendation

- Additional funding and resources
- Staffing and operational support

Anticipated Benefits

- Increase planning and implementation capacity, especially for smaller PSAPs
- Help 988s hire more staff or increase capacity in other ways



Prioritize technology investments

Challenge

- Technology Needs
- Outdated systems
- Manual tracking

Recommendation

- Invest in automated, privacy-compliant tech upgrades

Anticipated Benefits

- Eases staff workload
- Improves data and caller experience



Improve behavioral health call identification by 911



Challenge

- Difficulty identifying behavioral health calls to 911
- Misclassification of behavioral health calls

Recommendation

- Provide behavioral health training for 911 staff
- Update emergency medical dispatch (EMD) protocols

Anticipated Benefits

- Supports accurate call routing to 988
- Reinforces 988's role in behavioral crisis response



Develop a behavioral health interoperability continuum

Challenge

- The SAFECOM Interoperability Continuum does not address behavioral health, but served as a helpful framework

Recommendation

- Clear Pathways create a behavioral health-focused continuum

Anticipated Benefits

- Supports consistent, scalable system growth
- Allows flexible adaptation to local needs

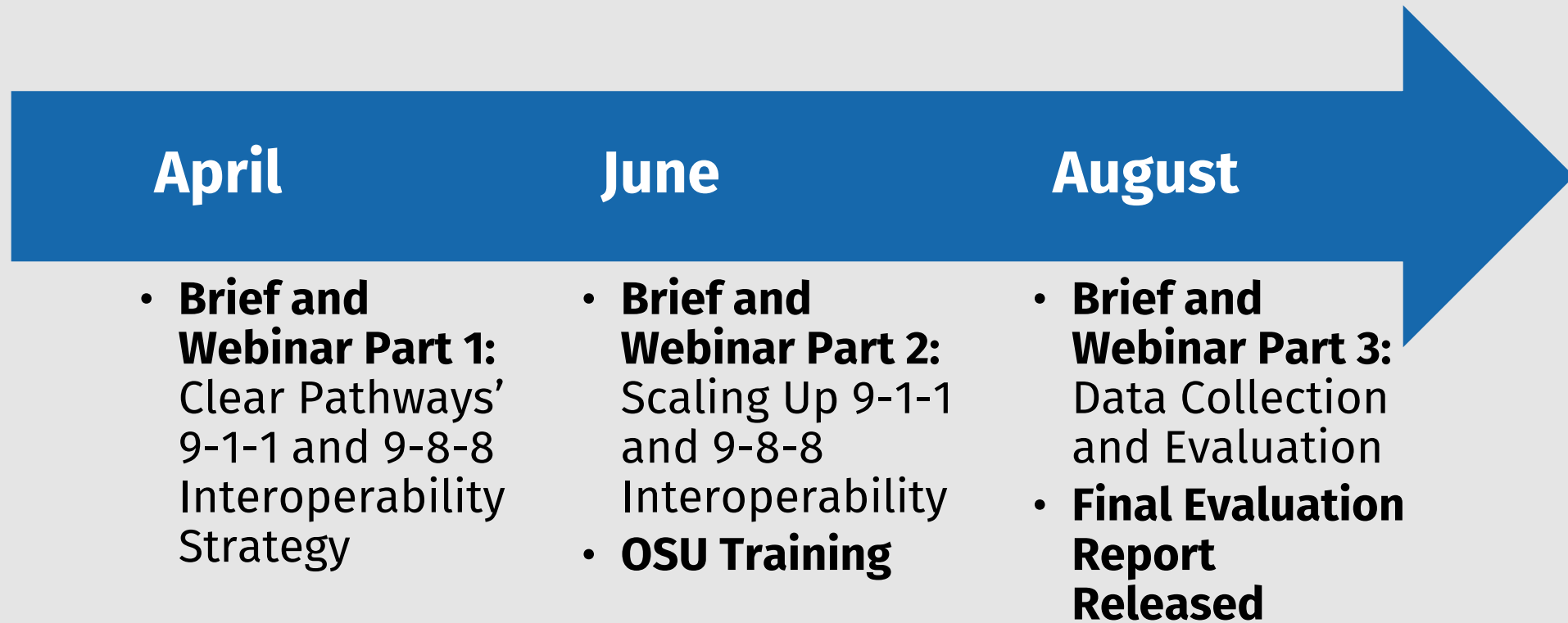




Q&A



3-Part Series



We Want to Hear from You!

- **Please complete a brief survey to:**
 - Let us know what feedback you have for us
 - Suggest future Lunch & Learn topics or speakers



Thank You!
Contact Us



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