



MaMHCA

Massachusetts Mental Health Counselors Association, Inc.

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Please Support “An Act Relative to Establishing a Behavioral Health Workforce Development Trust Fund” for LMHCs and other MA level behavioral health providers HB 1602 and HB 601 which provides the funding.

Dear Senator Flanagan and Representative Garlick, Co-Chairs, and members of the Joint Committee on Mental Health, Substance Use and Recovery,

I am a constituent, a licensed mental health counselor (LMHC) and member of the Massachusetts Mental Health Counselors Association. I strongly urge you to support HB 1602, “An Act Relative to Establishing a Behavioral Health Workforce Development Trust Fund.” This legislation, co-sponsored by Rep. Josh Cutler (D-Duxbury) and Sen. Joan Lovely (D-Salem), establishes the mechanism to fund the Behavioral Health Care Workforce Development Trust Fund. This bill is vital to expanding critical support to mental health providers and counseling consumers by providing essential financial relief to behavioral health hospitals and agencies.

Behavioral health providers working in hospitals, mental health agencies and private practice are mandated to have at least 600 hours of clinical supervision before being eligible for licensure as a Licensed Mental Health Counselor. This places financial and time-resource hardships on provider organizations to provide the mandated supervision. **This is essentially an unfunded mandate placed upon mental health agencies.** Prior legislation has not included the needed relief for providing this supervision mandate in behavioral health workforce development.

- The behavioral health professions graduate over 600 mental health professionals yearly, all of whom need qualified supervision to become eligible for professional licensure.

HB 601 funds the Behavioral Health Workforce Development Trust Fund by allocating 10% of funds generated by the Workforce Development Trust.

- Funds such as this have been established and funded for health care (not including behavioral health) and dentistry pulling from the same fund and using the same percentages.

This legislation would create a fund specifically to provide grant funding for behavioral health agencies, hospitals and professionals, to be used solely for the supervision and training of intern-level and graduate mental health professionals seeking licensure. This funding is essential to ensure a well-trained, licensed behavioral health workforce.

Benefits of this bill include:

- Improved mental health training and increased access to training for treatment professionals
- Oversight by task force comprised of behavioral health specialists
- Establishes a comparable fund similar to other professionals
- Increased safety for consumers of mental health services
- No additional cost incurred with establishment of the fund

Sincerely,

NAME:

ADDRESS: