



MaMHCA

Massachusetts Mental Health Counselors Association, Inc.

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HB 1602: An Act Relative to Establishing a Behavioral Health Workforce Development Trust Fund for LMHCs and other behavioral health providers; and HB 601 Funding the Fund

1. 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.
2. 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.
 - The behavioral health professions graduate over 500 mental health professionals yearly, all of whom need qualified supervision to become eligible for professional licensure.
3. Prior legislation has not included the needed relief for providing this supervision mandate in behavioral health workforce development. **This is essentially an unfunded mandate placed upon mental health agencies.**
4. **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.
5. **This legislation would create a fund specifically for behavioral health professionals to provide grant funding, 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:

- Improves mental health training and increases access for training for behavioral health treatment professionals
- Provides oversight by a task force comprised of behavioral health specialists
- Establishes a comparable fund similar to other health care professionals
- Increases safety for consumers of mental health services
- Incurs no additional cost with funding the trust

Please support HB 1602 and HB 601 to help ensure mental health consumers obtain needed, timely, safe, and qualified behavioral health care.