



## MaMHCA

Massachusetts Mental Health Counselors Association, Inc.

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### **HB 1787 “An Act Relative to expanding access and safety of mental health services.”**

This legislation, sponsored by Rep. Josh Cutler (D-Duxbury), includes licensed mental health counselors in the language of Chapter 123 Section 12, 22 and 35. This bill is vital to expanding the safety of mental health services to counseling consumers. It would allow LMHCs the ability to hospitalize clients who represent an immediate threat of harm to themselves or others.

The current exclusion of LMHCs from Chapter 123, Section 12, 22 and 35 often results in safety concerns for mental health consumers and providers. Chapter 123, Section 12, 22 and 35 provider eligibility for LMHCs is long overdue.

- LMHCs represent over 5,500 of today’s licensed mental health practitioners.
- LMHCs have a full scope of practice which includes assessing, diagnosing and treating severe behavioral and mental health issues
- LMHCs see their clients in a number of settings including hospitals, agencies and private practice.
- Unfortunately, Chapter 123, Section 12, 22 and 35 legislation has not been modernized to recognize LMHCs essential role in today’s health delivery system.
- Our proposed legislation utilizes these professionals to treat mental health disorders before they exacerbate into more serious and immediate acts that could be life threatening.

#### **Benefits of this bill include:**

- Improved mental health and safety access for treatment populations
- More immediate care for consumers in life threatening situations
- Better parity of mental health care
- Neutral cost of behavioral and mental health care, particularly for chronic conditions

I urge you to support **HB 1787** to help ensure mental health consumers obtain needed and timely mental health care.