

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 1617**

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

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**In the Year Two Thousand Nine**  
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An Act creating a special commission for a medical-legal partnership as a strategy to promote health and stability for low-income residents..

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:*

1           Section XX. There shall be a special commission to consist of 18 members to review the  
2 statewide implementation of the medical-legal partnership model – partnerships between legal  
3 services offices and community health centers or hospitals which focus on ensuring that low-  
4 income patients’ basic human needs are met, and that health disparities are reduced, through  
5 preventive legal intervention and assistance. The special commission shall consist of the  
6 following members: one member of the judiciary committee, one member of the health care  
7 finance committee, and 16 persons to be appointed by the governor, one of whom shall be a  
8 representative of the Boston Bar Association, one of whom shall be a representative of a health  
9 care-related foundation, one of whom shall be a representative of a third-party insurer, one of  
10 whom shall be a representative of the Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation, one of whom  
11 shall be a representative of the Massachusetts Bar Association, two of whom shall be  
12 representatives of the MLAC-funded legal services community, one of whom shall be a  
13 representative of a non-MLAC-funded, IOLTA-funded legal services program, one of whom  
14 shall be a representative of the MA Association of Community Health Centers, one of whom

15 shall be a representative of the MA Hospital Association, one of whom shall be a representative  
16 of the law school community, one of whom shall be a representative of the medical school  
17 community, one of whom shall be a representative of EOHHS, one of whom shall be a  
18 representative of the Disparities Action Network, one of whom shall be a representative of  
19 MLPC, one of whom shall be a representative of the private bar, and two of whom shall be  
20 health care staff who work as part of a medical-legal partnership.

21           The commission shall examine the implementation of medical-legal partnership in  
22 Massachusetts, with a special emphasis on exploring current and potential funding mechanisms  
23 and matching dollars between the health care delivery system and legal services. The  
24 commission shall also examine the role of preventive legal access as a strategy to address health  
25 disparities. The commission shall also convene a statewide summit on medical-legal partnership,  
26 in collaboration with interested stakeholders from the legal, medical, public health and  
27 governmental communities.

28           Said commission shall meet a minimum of 4 times, and report the results of its study and  
29 recommendations, if any, together with drafts of legislation necessary to carry its  
30 recommendations into effect by filing the same with the clerk of the senate and the clerk of the  
31 House of Representatives.