

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 1935**

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

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**In the Year Two Thousand Nine**  
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An Act relative to mental health services in Massachusetts correctional institutions, houses of correction and jails..

*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 1. Chapter 126 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2000 Official Edition,  
2 is hereby amended by inserting, after section 27, the following new section:

3           Section 28. Mental Health Examinations and Services.

4           The sheriff shall ensure that each person admitted to a county correctional facility,  
5 including a house of correction or jail, shall have access to mental health care consistent with his  
6 or her needs. Mental health care shall include but not be limited to suicide screening, mental  
7 health and substance abuse screening upon admission or transfer to a facility; mental health  
8 assessment within two weeks of admission or transfer and periodically thereafter; a  
9 comprehensive mental health evaluation within a time frame appropriate to the level or urgency;  
10 suicide prevention; crisis intervention; an individualized plan of care; psychiatric services,  
11 including medication and medication monitoring; individual and group psychotherapy;  
12 evaluation for transfer to a mental health facility; and discharge planning, including referral to

13 appropriate mental health services at the time of release and sufficient medication for continued  
14 treatment until enrollment in a public or private health plan.

15 a. Each such correctional facility shall comply with the principles and guidelines of the  
16 current version of the American Psychiatric Association Task Force Report on Psychiatric  
17 Services in Jails and Prisons, or such higher standards as the sheriff may require, with respect to  
18 the provision of mental health care.

19 b. The department of mental health shall inspect each such correctional facility at least  
20 annually to determine compliance with this section. The commissioner of mental health shall  
21 make a report of the findings and any recommendations from each inspection to the sheriff,  
22 including any recommendations for revisions to the standards for the provision of mental health  
23 care.

24 c. The sheriff shall require in each such correctional facility training of administrative,  
25 health care, and correctional staff including but not limited to the symptoms of chronic and  
26 persistent mental illnesses such as major depression, bipolar disorder, obsessive compulsive  
27 disorder, schizophrenia, and Borderline Personality Disorder; the medications used to treat these  
28 illnesses, the side effects of the medications, the types and causes of self-mutilation and  
29 strategies for dealing with mentally ill inmates in crisis. The sheriff shall develop protocols for  
30 said training in cooperation with the commissioner of mental health.

31 d. The commissioner of mental health shall file an annual report of its inspections of  
32 mental health care in county correctional facilities for the prior year, including any  
33 recommendations, with the secretary of public safety, the secretary of health and human services,  
34 the commissioner of corrections, each sheriff, the house and senate committees on ways and

35 means, the joint committee on health care financing, the joint committee on mental health and  
36 substance abuse and the legislative mental health caucus.

37 SECTION 2. Chapter 127 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2000 Official  
38 Edition, is hereby amended by inserting, after section 17, the following new section:

39 Section 17A. Mental Health Examinations and Services.

40 The commissioner shall ensure that each person admitted to a state correctional facility  
41 shall have access to mental health care consistent with his or her needs. Mental health care shall  
42 include but not be limited to suicide screening, mental health and substance abuse screening  
43 upon admission or transfer and periodically thereafter; a comprehensive mental health evaluation  
44 within a time frame appropriate to the level of urgency; suicide prevention; crisis intervention; an  
45 individualized plan of care; psychiatric services, including medication and medication  
46 monitoring; individual and group psychotherapy; evaluation for transfer to a mental health  
47 facility; and discharge planning, including referral to appropriate mental health services at the  
48 time of release and sufficient medication for continued treatment until enrollment in a public or  
49 private health plan.

50 a. Each such correctional facility shall comply with the principles and guidelines of the  
51 current version of the American Psychiatric Association Task Force Report on Psychiatric  
52 Services in Jails and Prisons, or such higher standards as the sheriff may require, with respect to  
53 the provision of mental health care.

54 b. The department of mental health shall inspect each such correctional facility at least  
55 annually to determine compliance with this section. The commissioner of mental health shall  
56 make a report of the findings and any recommendations from each inspection to the sheriff,

57 including any recommendations for revisions to the standards for the provision of mental health  
58 care.

59 c. The commissioner shall require in each such correctional facility training of  
60 administrative, health care, and correctional staff including but not limited to the symptoms of  
61 chronic and persistent mental illnesses such as major depression, bipolar disorder, obsessive  
62 compulsive disorder, schizophrenia, and Borderline Personality Disorder; the medications used  
63 to treat these illnesses, the side effects of the medications, the types and causes of self-mutilation  
64 and strategies for dealing with mentally ill inmates in crisis. The commissioner shall develop  
65 protocols for said training in cooperation with the commissioner of mental health.

66 d. The commissioner of mental health shall file an annual report of its inspections of  
67 mental health care in state correctional facilities for the prior year, including any  
68 recommendations, with the secretary of public safety, the secretary of health and human services,  
69 the commissioner of correction, each sheriff, the house and senate committees on ways and  
70 means, the joint committee on health care financing, the joint committee on mental health and  
71 substance abuse and the legislative mental health caucus.