

SENATE No. 734

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand Nine

An Act to examine quality and access to public inpatient behavioral health care in the commonwealth..

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

1 Notwithstanding the provision of any general or special law to the contrary, the Joint
2 Committee on Mental Health and Substance Abuse shall conduct or commission an independent
3 study of the Department of Mental Health Inpatient Hospital System. Said study shall include,
4 but not be limited to the following:

5 Whether there is sufficient inpatient capacity in the public mental health system to
6 effectively and appropriately meet the needs of individuals suffering from mental illness;

7 Whether patients are receiving timely access to public inpatient mental health facilities;

8 An assessment as to how many individuals on a monthly basis:

9 Have been referred for admission to a public inpatient hospital; or

10 Are pending decision for admission to such hospital; or

11 Are approved for admission by the Department to such hospital and are on a waiting list
12 for public inpatient hospital services.

13 This assessment must include a review of the timeliness of the placement of patients into
14 appropriate intermediate care at such hospitals.

15 Whether the current process used to determine eligibility for public inpatient hospital
16 services is efficient and whether it is adversely impacting the appropriate utilization of acute
17 inpatient psychiatric beds. Such analysis shall include recommendations for whether and how
18 such determination process could be improved.

19 A review of admissions and re-admissions of Department of Mental Health clients into
20 acute inpatient psychiatric hospitals or units;

21 Any other issue of relevance or concern to the Committee.

22 The entity chosen to conduct the study shall consult with the Executive Office of Human
23 Services, the Department of Mental Health, consumers, and providers. Consultation with
24 providers shall include but not be limited to the Massachusetts Association of Behavioral Health
25 Systems and its member hospitals and institutions. Said study shall be completed by December
26 31, 2009 and submitted to the Governor, the House and Senate Clerks, the Joint Committee on
27 Mental Health and Substance Abuse and the House and Senate Ways and Means Committees.