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HOUSE . . . . . No. 4558

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
STATE HOUSE · BOSTON, MA 02133

CHARLES D. BAKER
GOVERNOR

KARYN POLITO
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

July 28, 2016

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives,

I am returning to you unsigned H. 4489, "An Act Relative to Administering Controlled Substances," because the proposed legislation unnecessarily compromises the health and safety of persons who are prescribed psychotropic medications for the treatment of mental health and substance use disorders.

The best practice for treating mental health and substance use disorders involves a combination of medication, clinical treatment, psychosocial interventions, laboratory assessments, and support. Medications used in the treatment of mental health problems and substance use disorders carry a risk of serious adverse medical reactions, including fatal overdose. Accordingly, these medications should only be administered by clinicians trained to observe and monitor the patient and in the context of a true clinician-patient relationship that also includes treatment and engagement efforts.

This Act would permit pharmacists to administer these medications without proper education and training and outside the context of a therapeutic prescriber-patient relationship. While pharmacists are trained in administration of some medications used to prevent certain illnesses, such as vaccines, pharmacists do not receive professional education or training in the administration of the broad array of powerful medications used to treat substance use disorder or mental illness. Pharmacists also cannot rely on the insights available in a true clinician-patient

relationship in monitoring the use of these medications by patients who require treatment for mental health and substance use disorders.

For the foregoing reasons, I am returning this bill to you unsigned.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles D. Baker,
Governor