

# HOUSE . . . . . No. 4447

---

---

## The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

---

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, February 26, 2020.

The committee on Public Health, to whom was referred the petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 1943) of Kay Khan and others relative to establishing a special commission (including members of the General Court) to study the integration of support groups into our healthcare system, reports recommending that the accompanying bill (House, No. 4447) ought to pass.

For the committee,

JOHN J. MAHONEY.

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 4447**

---

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**In the One Hundred and Ninety-First General Court  
(2019-2020)**  
\_\_\_\_\_

An Act establishing a special commission to study the integration of support groups into our healthcare system.

*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. (a) Notwithstanding any special or general law to the contrary, there shall  
2 be a special commission established to conduct a study and make recommendations on the  
3 integration of support groups into the existing health care system. The commission shall consist  
4 of the following members, or their designees: the house and senate chairs of the joint committee  
5 on public health, who shall serve as co-chairs; the house and senate chairs of the joint committee  
6 on mental health, substance use and recovery; the secretary of the executive office of health and  
7 human services; the assistant secretary for MassHealth; the commissioner of mental health; 2  
8 members of the house of representatives to be appointed by the speaker of the house; 2 members  
9 of the senate to be appointed by the senate president; 1 representative of the health policy  
10 commission; 1 representative of GPS Group Peer Support, LLC; 1 representative of the National  
11 Association of Social Workers; 1 representative of the National Alliance on Mental Illness  
12 Massachusetts; 1 representative of the Massachusetts Coalition for Suicide Prevention; 1  
13 representative of the Massachusetts Organization for Addiction Recovery; 1 representative of the

14 Massachusetts Medical Society; 1 representative of the Massachusetts Child Psychiatry Access  
15 Program for Moms; 1 representative of the American College of Obstetricians and  
16 Gynecologists; and 1 representative of the Massachusetts Mental Health Counselors Association.

17 (b) The commission shall examine and make recommendations on topics  
18 including, but not limited to: (i) existing use of support groups, including pilot programs  
19 authorized by the executive office of health and human services, and their effect on health care  
20 costs and health outcomes; (ii) sustainable strategies that the commonwealth could employ to  
21 integrate support groups into holistic health care solutions; and (iii) Massachusetts laws and  
22 regulations that are currently in place, or could be put in place, that support or hamper the use of  
23 support groups to improve healthcare outcomes and bring down costs.

24 (c) The commission may hold hearings and invite testimony from experts and  
25 the public to gather information. The commission may involve other experts, stakeholders and  
26 members of the public in its work through listening and working group sessions or any other  
27 mechanisms the commission chooses.

28 (d) The commission shall file its recommendations, including any drafts of  
29 legislation or regulations necessary to carry out its recommendations, with the clerks of the  
30 house of representatives and the senate, the house and senate chairs of the joint committee on  
31 public health, the house and senate chairs of the joint committee on mental health, substance use  
32 and recovery and the house and senate chairs of the joint committee on health care financing, not  
33 later than December 31, 2020.