

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 996**

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

PRESENTED BY:

***Sheila C. Harrington***

*To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:*

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act to extend coverage for any willing provider to qualify as a mental health professional.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Sheila C. Harrington</i>	<i>1st Middlesex</i>	<i>1/16/2019</i>
<i>Ruth B. Balseer</i>	<i>12th Middlesex</i>	<i>1/25/2019</i>
<i>Kay Khan</i>	<i>11th Middlesex</i>	<i>1/25/2019</i>

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By Mrs. Harrington of Groton, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 996) of Sheila C. Harrington, Ruth B. Balser and Kay Khan relative to the right of health care consumers to receive treatment of mental health conditions from providers of their choice. Financial Services.

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[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION  
SEE HOUSE, NO. 2958 OF 2017-2018.]

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

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**In the One Hundred and Ninety-First General Court  
(2019-2020)**  
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An Act to extend coverage for any willing provider to qualify as a mental health professional.

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

1 Chapter 176O of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after section 4 the  
2 following section:-

3 4A. (a) A carrier shall not exclude from its network or list of authorized providers any  
4 licensed mental health or substance abuse provider located within the geographic coverage area  
5 of the health benefit plan if the provider is willing to meet the terms and conditions for  
6 participation established by the carrier.

7 (b) A health benefit plan shall provide coverage for treatment of a mental health  
8 condition and shall not establish any rate, term or condition that places a greater financial burden  
9 on an insured for access to treatment for a mental health condition than for access to treatment

10 for a physical health condition. Any deductible or out-of-pocket limits required under a health  
11 benefit plan shall be comprehensive for coverage of both mental health and physical health  
12 conditions.

13 (c) This section reaffirms the right of health care consumers to receive treatment of a  
14 mental health condition from a provider of their choice provided that said provider is licensed  
15 and certified by the commonwealth without interruption caused by cessation of consumer  
16 coverage by a given carrier or employer.