

**SENATE . . . . . No. 1147**

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

PRESENTED BY:

***Cindy F. Friedman***

*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 relative to a behavioral health workforce commission.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	
<i>Cindy F. Friedman</i>	<i>Fourth Middlesex</i>	
<i>Sean Garballey</i>	<i>23rd Middlesex</i>	<i>1/28/2019</i>
<i>Dean A. Tran</i>	<i>Worcester and Middlesex</i>	<i>1/30/2019</i>
<i>Anne M. Gobi</i>	<i>Worcester, Hampden, Hampshire and Middlesex</i>	<i>1/30/2019</i>
<i>Jonathan D. Zlotnik</i>	<i>2nd Worcester</i>	<i>1/31/2019</i>
<i>Elizabeth A. Malia</i>	<i>11th Suffolk</i>	<i>2/1/2019</i>
<i>Susannah M. Whipps</i>	<i>2nd Franklin</i>	<i>2/1/2019</i>
<i>Sal N. DiDomenico</i>	<i>Middlesex and Suffolk</i>	<i>2/1/2019</i>

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By Ms. Friedman, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 1147) of Cindy F. Friedman, Sean Garballey, Dean A. Tran, Anne M. Gobi and other members of the General Court for legislation relative to a behavioral health workforce commission. Mental Health, Substance Use and Recovery.

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**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 relative to a behavioral health workforce commission.

*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. There shall be a behavioral health workforce commission to study the  
2 workforce needs of the behavioral health system in the commonwealth and to identify reasons  
3 for behavioral health workforce shortages, including, but not limited to, shortages in inpatient  
4 and community-based settings.

5           The commission shall issue a report that shall include: (1) an assessment of the current  
6 behavioral health workforce, workforce needs and workforce shortages by service type, settings  
7 and geography; (2) barriers to increasing the workforce in any identified shortage areas; (3) the  
8 impact of commercial and public behavioral health wage rates on the ability to recruit and retain  
9 behavioral health providers; and (4) recommendations and best practices proven to have the most  
10 impact on addressing behavioral health workforce shortages. In preparing the report, the  
11 commission shall look at the efficacy of: (i) expanding and funding mechanisms for loan  
12 forgiveness and scholarship programs for all providers in the behavioral health field, regardless

13 of whether they practice in a health professional shortage area; (ii) the inclusion of behavioral  
14 health curriculum earlier in medical, nursing, and other educational programs; (iii) expanding  
15 slots at associates and bachelors level registered nurse programs; (vi) creating programs to  
16 encourage registered nurses to work in psychiatric settings, including internships and fellowships  
17 in psychiatric nursing; (v) increasing the number of psychiatric clinical sites for nursing students;  
18 (vi) increasing training for behavioral health providers to treat severe mental illness and  
19 substance use disorders; (vii) expanding the scope of practice for psychiatric nurse mental health  
20 clinical specialists and psychiatric nurse practitioners in inpatient settings by allowing all  
21 providers to work at the top of their license; and (viii) any other recommendations relevant to  
22 addressing behavioral health workforce shortages.

23         The commission shall consist of 23 members: the secretary of health and human services  
24 or a designee, who shall serve as chair; the commissioner of mental health or a designee; the  
25 commissioner of public health or a designee; the director of the office of Medicaid or a designee,  
26 the commissioner of the department of higher education or a designee; and 1 representative from  
27 each of the following organizations: the Massachusetts Psychiatric Society, the Massachusetts  
28 Medical Society, the Massachusetts Association of Advanced Practice Psychiatric Nurses, the  
29 Massachusetts chapter of the National Association of Social Workers, the Massachusetts  
30 Psychological Association, the Massachusetts Society of Addiction Medicine, the American  
31 Nurses Association Massachusetts, the Organization of Nurse Leaders, the Massachusetts Health  
32 and Hospital Association, the Association of Behavioral Healthcare, the Massachusetts  
33 Association of Behavioral Health Systems, the Massachusetts League of Community Health  
34 Centers, the Massachusetts Organization for Addiction Recovery, the Massachusetts Association  
35 for Mental Health, the National Alliance on Mental Illness of Massachusetts, the Children's

36 Mental Health Campaign, the Massachusetts Association of Health Plans, and the Blue Cross  
37 Blue Shield of Massachusetts.

38           The commission shall file a report on its findings and recommendations, together with  
39 any recommendations for legislation, with the clerks of the house of representatives and the  
40 senate and with the chairs of the joint committee on mental health, substance use and recovery  
41 no later than 1 year from the effective date of this act.