

HOUSE No. 1275

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Kay Khan and Kate Donaghue

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 establishing a behavioral health workforce center of excellence.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Kay Khan</i>	<i>11th Middlesex</i>	<i>1/19/2023</i>
<i>Kate Donaghue</i>	<i>19th Worcester</i>	<i>1/19/2023</i>
<i>Samantha Montaño</i>	<i>15th Suffolk</i>	<i>2/13/2023</i>
<i>Carol A. Doherty</i>	<i>3rd Bristol</i>	<i>2/20/2023</i>
<i>John J. Cronin</i>	<i>Worcester and Middlesex</i>	<i>4/11/2023</i>
<i>Tommy Vitolo</i>	<i>15th Norfolk</i>	<i>2/5/2024</i>

HOUSE No. 1275

By Representatives Khan of Newton and Donaghue of Westborough, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 1275) of Kay Khan, Kate Donaghue and others for legislation to establish a behavioral health workforce center of excellence at a state or community college. Higher Education.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE HOUSE, NO. 1346 OF 2021-2022.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Third General Court
(2023-2024)**

An Act establishing a behavioral health workforce center of excellence.

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. Chapter 15A of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2020 Official
2 Edition, is hereby amended by inserting after Section 45 the following section:-

3 Section 46.

4 (a) There shall be a Behavioral Health Workforce Center of Excellence, herein the
5 Center. The purpose of the Center shall be to gather data and research to advise policy leaders on
6 how to address the crisis in the behavioral health workforce across the commonwealth. In
7 consultation with public institutions of higher education, the commissioner shall establish the
8 center at one of the public institutions of higher education in the commonwealth. The Center
9 shall:

10 (i) Engage a diverse, cross discipline group of stakeholders to address the needs of the
11 behavioral health field by studying the current landscape, mapping or building clear career
12 ladders, and identifying and addressing training needs;

13 (ii) Annually inventory the professional licenses and certifications available for those
14 who work in the mental health and addiction treatment field, including, but not limited to, the
15 number of licensed and certified individuals in the state, the academic and supervisory
16 requirements to achieve each certification, the scope of practice of each license, the academic
17 programs available in the state and cost of these programs;

18 (iii) Annually create demographic and geographic profiles of the current field of
19 practitioners, examine ways to increase the diversity, equity and inclusion of the workforce, and
20 determine recommendations to increase the linguistic and cultural competency of practitioners;

21 (iv) Annually inventory the number of professional and paraprofessional practitioners
22 delivering direct clinical or recovery services, including practitioner acceptance of insurance;

23 (v) Work with the advisory committee established herein to annually inventory the
24 workforce needs in the behavioral health system to establish the gaps that exist by professional
25 license and certificate, and practice settings;

26 (vi) Inventory the number of individuals with professional licenses or certifications who
27 no longer practice behavioral health in third-party reimbursable settings;

28 (vii) Examine any regulatory changes recommended by licensing and registration entities
29 at the Department of Public Health and offer public written assessments to these entities during

30 the regulatory process that includes the effect of these requirements on the existing workforce
31 and the future workforce pipeline;

32 (viii) Examine existing training funds across state and federal agencies, including but not
33 limited to, the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, the Commonwealth
34 Corporation, the Executive Office of Education, the Executive Office of Health and Human
35 Services and its constituent agencies, and make recommendations on ways to leverage funding
36 and resources to focus on existing and needed training programs for the field;

37 (ix) Work with existing education and training programs on curriculum improvements
38 focused on best practices in the current behavioral health landscape and coordinate these needs
39 with state purchasing agencies to better align educational institutional with the needs in the field;

40 (x) Examine existing loan forgiveness opportunities for practitioners and make
41 recommendations on ways to expand current recruitment and retention initiatives;

42 (xi) Create and fund technical assistance programming for value based purchasing and
43 care preparation, and behavioral health and primary care integration;

44 (xii) Examine other matters deemed appropriate by the Center.

45 (b) The Center shall establish an advisory committee. The advisory committee shall be:

46 (i) cochaired by a person appointed by the Department of Higher Education and a person
47 appointed by the Association for Behavioral Healthcare and, (ii) the commissioner shall select
48 members, including, but not limited to, representation from each of the following entities: the
49 Executive Office of Health and Human Services, the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce
50 Development, the Department of Public Health, the Department of Mental Health, the Blue

51 Cross and Blue Shield of Massachusetts, the Massachusetts Association of Health Plans, NAMI
52 Massachusetts, the Massachusetts Organization for Addiction Recovery, the Parent Professional
53 Advocacy League, the Massachusetts Association for Behavioral Health Systems, the
54 Massachusetts Health & Hospital Association, the National Association of Social Workers-
55 Massachusetts, the Massachusetts Psychological Association, the Massachusetts Mental Health
56 Counselors Association, and the Massachusetts Association for Mental Health. The advisory
57 committee shall meet regularly and discuss the state of the behavioral workforce in
58 Massachusetts. The committee shall meet regularly and not less than four times annually.