HOUSE No. 1995

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Michael P. Kushmerek and Sally P. Kerans

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 maternal mental and behavioral health care workforce grants.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
Michael P. Kushmerek	3rd Worcester	1/13/2023
Sally P. Kerans	13th Essex	1/13/2023
Lindsay N. Sabadosa	1st Hampshire	1/31/2023
Brian W. Murray	10th Worcester	2/1/2023
Vanna Howard	17th Middlesex	2/2/2023
Carlos González	10th Hampden	2/2/2023
Rodney M. Elliott	16th Middlesex	2/3/2023
Tram T. Nguyen	18th Essex	7/10/2023

HOUSE No. 1995

By Representatives Kushmerek of Fitchburg and Kerans of Danvers, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 1995) of Michael P. Kushmerek, Sally P. Kerans and others for legislation to establish maternal mental and behavioral health care workforce grants. Mental Health, Substance Use and Recovery.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION SEE HOUSE, NO. 4740 OF 2021-2022.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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

An Act establishing maternal mental and behavioral health care workforce grants.

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 6A of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after section 16CC the
- 2 following section:-
- 3 Section 16DD. (a) As used in this section, the following words shall, unless the context
- 4 requires otherwise, have the following meanings:-
- 5 "Health professional shortage area", a specific geographic area, specific population group
- 6 or specific facility federally designated as having a critical shortage of primary, dental, or mental
- 7 health care providers.

- 8 "Maternal healthcare desert", a region where the population has inadequate access to 9 maternal healthcare.
- "Maternal mental and behavioral health care workforce", mental or behavioral health care

 providers who focus on maternal or perinatal health.
- "Medically underserved populations", federally designated populations that have too few primary care providers, high infant mortality, high poverty or high elderly population.
 - "Mental or behavioral health care provider", a health care provider in the field of mental or behavioral health, including substance use disorders, acting in accordance with the laws of the commonwealth.
- "Secretary", the secretary of health and human services.

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- (b) The secretary may award grants to entities to establish or expand programs to grow and diversify the maternal mental and behavioral health care workforce.
 - (c) Recipients of grants under this section shall use the grants to grow and diversify the maternal mental and behavioral health care workforce by:
 - (1) establishing schools or programs that provide education and training to individuals seeking appropriate licensing or certification as mental or behavioral health care providers who will specialize in maternal mental health conditions or substance use disorders; or
 - (2) expanding the capacity of existing schools or programs described in paragraph (1) of this subsection, for the purposes of increasing the number of students enrolled in those schools or programs, including by awarding scholarships for students.

28 (d) In awarding grants under this section, the secretary shall give priority to any entity
29 that:

- (1) has demonstrated a commitment to recruiting and retaining students and faculty from medically underserved populations or maternal health care deserts;
- (2) has developed a strategy to recruit and retain a diverse pool of students into the maternal mental and behavioral health care workforce program or school supported by funds received through the grant, particularly from medically underserved populations;
- (3) has developed a strategy to recruit and retain students who plan to practice in a health professional shortage area;
- (4) has developed a strategy to recruit and retain students who plan to practice in an area with significant racial, ethnic and rural disparities in maternal health outcomes, to the extent practicable; and
- (5) includes in the standard curriculum for all students within the maternal mental and behavioral health care workforce program or school a bias, racism or discrimination training program that includes training on implicit bias and racism.
 - (e) The period of a grant awarded to an entity under this section shall be up to 5 years.
- 44 (f) To seek a grant under this section, an entity shall submit to the secretary an
 45 application at such time, in such manner and containing such information as the secretary may
 46 require.
 - (g) The secretary shall provide, directly or by contract, technical assistance to entities seeking or receiving a grant under this section on the development, use, evaluation and post-

grant period sustainability of the maternal mental and behavioral health care workforce programs or schools proposed, established or expanded through the grant.

- (h) The secretary shall collaborate with the executive office of labor and workforce development to develop maternal mental and behavioral health care workforce standards to measure the efficacy of grants awarded pursuant to this section.
- (i) As a condition of receipt of a grant under this section for a maternal mental and behavioral health care workforce program or school, a recipient of funds shall agree to submit to the secretary an annual report on the activities conducted through the grant. The report shall include:
 - (1) the number and demographics of students participating in the program or school;
- (2) the extent to which students in the program or school are entering careers in health professional shortage areas designated by the commonwealth, areas with significant racial and ethnic disparities in maternal health outcomes and maternal health care deserts to the extent such data are available; and
- (3) whether the program or school has included in the standard curriculum for all students a bias, racism or discrimination training program that includes training on implicit bias and racism, and if so data on maternal mental and behavioral health care outcomes for patients belonging to medically underserved populations who receive treatment from such students.
- (j) Not later than 4 years after the date of enactment of this section, the secretary shall prepare and submit to the clerks of the house of representatives and the senate, and post on the

- internet website of the department a report on the effectiveness of the grant program under this section at:
- 71 (1) recruiting students from medically underserved populations;

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- (2) increasing the number of mental or behavioral health care providers specializing in
 maternal mental health conditions or substance use disorders from medically underserved
 populations;
 - (3) increasing the number of mental or behavioral health care providers specializing in maternal mental health conditions or substance use disorders working in health professional shortage areas; and
 - (4) increasing the number of mental or behavioral health care providers specializing in maternal mental health conditions or substance use disorders working in areas with significant racial and ethnic disparities in maternal health outcomes, as well as maternal health care deserts and rural areas, to the extent such data are available.