

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 991**

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

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PRESENTED BY:

***Marjorie C. Decker***

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*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 reimbursement for recovery peer specialists.

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PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Marjorie C. Decker</i>	<i>25th Middlesex</i>	<i>1/20/2023</i>

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 991**

By Representative Decker of Cambridge, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 991) of Marjorie C. Decker relative to reimbursement for recovery peer specialists. Financial Services.

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

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

An Act relative to reimbursement for recovery peer specialists.

*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 32A of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2020 Official  
2 Edition, is hereby amended by adding the following new section:-

3 Section 31. (a) The commission shall provide to any active or retired employee of the  
4 commonwealth who is insured under the group insurance commission coverage for the provision  
5 of behavioral health or substance use disorder services provided by peer support specialists,  
6 including but not limited to, peer recovery coaches and recovery support navigators, regardless  
7 of the setting these services are provided in. This coverage shall include coverage of peer  
8 recovery coaches and recovery support navigators who are employed by health care facilities and  
9 who only provide recovery coach or recovery support navigator services for patients while the  
10 patient is being treated in an emergency department, acute care hospital, freestanding psychiatric  
11 hospital, or substance use disorder facility. The commission shall include reimbursement for the  
12 provision of said services via telemedicine, electronic or telephonic consultation. The contractual  
13 rate for these services may be no less than the prevailing MassHealth rate for peer recovery

14 coach services or recovery support navigator services. The benefits in this section shall not be  
15 subject to any deductible, coinsurance, copayments, or out-of-pocket limits. Peer support  
16 specialist services, including peer recovery coach services and recovery support navigator  
17 services shall be deemed medically necessary and shall not require prior authorization.

18 SECTION 2. Chapter 118E of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2020 Official  
19 Edition, is hereby amended by adding the following new section:-

20 Section 83. (a) The division and its contracted health insurers, health plans, health  
21 maintenance organizations, behavioral health management firms and third-party administrators  
22 under contract to a Medicaid managed care organization, accountable care organization, or  
23 primary care clinician plan shall provide coverage for the provision of behavioral health or  
24 substance use disorder services provided by peer support specialists, including but not limited to,  
25 peer recovery coaches, and recovery support navigators, regardless of the setting these services  
26 are provided in. This coverage shall include coverage of peer recovery coaches and recovery  
27 support navigators who are employed by health care facilities and who only provide recovery  
28 coach or recovery support navigator services for patients while the patient is being treated in an  
29 emergency department, acute care hospital, freestanding psychiatric hospital, or substance use  
30 disorder facility. The division and its contracted health insurers, health plans, health maintenance  
31 organizations, behavioral health management firms and third-party administrators shall include  
32 reimbursement for the provision of said services via telemedicine, electronic or telephonic  
33 consultation. The benefits in this section shall not be subject to any deductible, coinsurance,  
34 copayments, or out-of-pocket limits. Peer support specialist services, including peer recovery  
35 coach services and recovery support navigator services shall be deemed medically necessary and  
36 shall not require prior authorization by an insurer.

37 SECTION 3. Chapter 175 of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
38 inserting after section 4TT the following new section:-

39 Section 47UU. (a) Any policy, contract, agreement, plan or certificate of insurance  
40 issued, delivered or renewed within the commonwealth, which is considered creditable coverage  
41 under section 1 of chapter 118M, shall provide coverage for the provision of behavioral health or  
42 substance use disorder services provided by peer support specialists, including but not limited to,  
43 peer recovery coaches and recovery support navigators, regardless of the setting these services  
44 are provided in. This coverage shall include coverage of peer recovery coaches and recovery  
45 support navigators who are employed by health care facilities and who only provide recovery  
46 coach or recovery support navigator services for patients while the patient is being treated in an  
47 emergency department, acute care hospital, freestanding psychiatric hospital, or substance use  
48 disorder facility. The policy, contract, agreement, plan or certificate of insurance shall include  
49 reimbursement for the provision of said services via telemedicine, electronic or telephonic  
50 consultation. The contractual rate for these services may be no less than the prevailing  
51 MassHealth rate for peer recovery coach services or recovery support navigator services. The  
52 benefits in this section shall not be subject to any deductible, coinsurance, copayments, or out-of-  
53 pocket limits. Peer support specialist services, including peer recovery coach services and  
54 recovery support navigator services shall be deemed medically necessary and shall not require  
55 prior authorization

56 SECTION 4. Chapter 176A of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
57 inserting after section 8UU the following new section:-

58           Section 8VV. (a) Any contract between a subscriber and the corporation under an  
59 individual or group hospital service plan that is delivered, issued, or renewed within the  
60 commonwealth shall provide coverage for the provision of behavioral health or substance use  
61 disorder services provided by peer support specialists, including but not limited to, peer recovery  
62 coaches and recovery support navigators, regardless of the setting these services are provided in.  
63 This coverage shall include coverage of peer recovery coaches and recovery support navigators  
64 who are employed by health care facilities and who only provide recovery coach or recovery  
65 support navigator services for patients while the patient is being treated in an emergency  
66 department, acute care hospital, freestanding psychiatric hospital, or substance use disorder  
67 facility. The contract shall include reimbursement for the provision of said services via  
68 telemedicine, electronic or telephonic consultation. The contractual rate for these services may  
69 be no less than the prevailing MassHealth rate for peer recovery coach services or recovery  
70 support navigator services. The benefits in this section shall not be subject to any deductible,  
71 coinsurance, copayments, or out-of-pocket limits. Peer support specialist services, including peer  
72 recovery coach services and recovery support navigator services shall be deemed medically  
73 necessary and shall not require prior authorization.

74           SECTION 5. Chapter 176B of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
75 adding the following new section after section 4UU:

76           Section 4VV. (a) Any subscription certificate under an individual or group medical  
77 service agreement delivered, issued, or renewed within the commonwealth shall provide  
78 coverage for the provision of behavioral health or substance use disorder services provided by  
79 peer support specialists, including but not limited to, peer recovery coaches and recovery support  
80 navigators, regardless of the setting these services are provided in. This coverage shall include

81 coverage of peer recovery coaches and recovery support navigators who are employed by health  
82 care facilities and who only provide recovery coach or recovery support navigator services for  
83 patients while the patient is being treated in an emergency department, acute care hospital,  
84 freestanding psychiatric hospital, or substance use disorder facility. The subscription certificate  
85 shall include reimbursement for the provision of said services via telemedicine, electronic or  
86 telephonic consultation. The contractual rate for these services may be no less than the prevailing  
87 MassHealth rate for peer recovery coach services or recovery support navigator services. The  
88 benefits in this section shall not be subject to any deductible, coinsurance, copayments, or out-of-  
89 pocket limits. Peer support specialist services, including peer recovery coach services and  
90 recovery support navigator services shall be deemed medically necessary and shall not require  
91 prior authorization.

92 SECTION 6. Chapter 176G of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
93 inserting after section 4MM the following new section:-

94 Section 4NN. (a) An individual or group health maintenance contract that is issued or  
95 renewed within or without the commonwealth shall provide coverage for the provision of  
96 behavioral health or substance use disorder services provided by peer support specialists,  
97 including but not limited to, peer recovery coaches and recovery support navigators, regardless  
98 of the setting these services are provided in. This coverage shall include coverage of peer  
99 recovery coaches and recovery support navigators who are employed by health care facilities and  
100 who only provide recovery coach or recovery support navigator services for patients while the  
101 patient is being treated in an emergency department, acute care hospital, freestanding psychiatric  
102 hospital, or substance use disorder facility. The individual or group health maintenance contract  
103 shall include reimbursement for the provision of said services via telemedicine, electronic or

104 telephonic consultation. The contractual rate for these services may be no less than the prevailing  
105 MassHealth rate for peer recovery coach services or recovery support navigator services. The  
106 benefits in this section shall not be subject to any deductible, coinsurance, copayments, or out-of-  
107 pocket limits. Peer support specialist services, including peer recovery coach services and  
108 recovery support navigator services shall be deemed medically necessary and shall not require  
109 prior authorization.

110 SECTION 7. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, the division of  
111 insurance, in consultation with the division of medical assistance, shall promulgate regulations or  
112 issue sub-regulatory guidance to require carriers reimburse acute care hospitals and clinics  
113 licensed under chapter 111 of the General laws, for the provision of behavioral health or  
114 substance use disorder services provided by peer support specialists, including but not limited to,  
115 peer recovery coaches and recovery support navigators. The regulations or sub-regulatory  
116 guidance shall include reimbursement for the provision of said services via telemedicine,  
117 electronic or telephonic consultation.

118 SECTION 8. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, the bureau of  
119 substance addiction services within the department of public health shall conduct a  
120 comprehensive report addressing barriers to certification, credentialing, and other employment  
121 and practice requirements of peer recovery specialists, including peer recovery coaches and  
122 recovery support navigators. The report shall include, but not be limited to, (i) cost barriers for  
123 individuals with lived experience, including but not limited to, application and examination fees  
124 for initial certification and credentialing, (ii) cost barriers to certification and credentialing  
125 renewals, (iii) cost and reimbursement barriers for hospitals and clinics licensed under chapter  
126 111 to hire, train, and retain peer recovery coaches and peer support navigators, (iv) eligibility

127 requirements for certification and credentialing, and (v) access to training programs and  
128 resources. The report shall also include recommendations to address said barriers. The  
129 department shall submit a copy of the report to the executive office of health and human  
130 services, the clerks of the senate and house of representatives, and the joint committee on mental  
131 health, substance use, and recovery within 90 days of the effective date of this act.

132           SECTION 9. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, the bureau of  
133 substance addiction services within the department of public health shall establish or arrange for  
134 a comprehensive peer support program to provide mentorship, technical assistance, and support  
135 resources for the wellbeing of peer support specialists, including, but not limited to, peer  
136 recovery coaches and recovery support navigators. The program shall include, but not be limited  
137 to, a network for peer-to-peer trainings, education, mentorship, counseling and support;  
138 educational and other clinical support materials; technical assistance for certification,  
139 credentialing, and other employment and practice requirements; and billing technical assistance  
140 for organizations that employ peer support specialists, including peer recovery coaches and  
141 recovery support navigators.