

# SENATE . . . . . No. 2678

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## The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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

SENATE, April 1, 2024.

The committee on Higher Education, to whom was referred the petitions (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 829) of John F. Keenan and Michael O. Moore for legislation to establish a behavioral health workforce center of excellence; and (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, report the accompanying bill (Senate, No. 2678).

For the committee,  
Joanne M. Comerford

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

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**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Third General Court  
(2023-2024)**  
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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. There shall be a Behavioral Health Workforce Center of Excellence, herein  
4 the Center. The purpose of the Center shall be to gather data and research to advise policy  
5 leaders on how to address the crisis in the behavioral health workforce across the  
6 commonwealth. In consultation with public institutions of higher education, the commissioner  
7 shall establish the center at one of the public institutions of higher education in the  
8 commonwealth.

9           The Center shall:

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

13           (b)     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           (c)     Annually create demographic profiles of the current field of practitioners.

19           (d)     Annually inventory the number of professional and paraprofessional practitioners  
20 delivering direct clinical or recovery services, including practitioner acceptance of insurance.

21           (e)     Work with the advisory committee established herein to annually inventory the  
22 workforce needs in the behavioral health system to establish the gaps that exist by professional  
23 license and certificate, and practice settings.

24           (f)     Inventory the number of individuals with professional licenses or certifications  
25 who no longer practice behavioral health in third-party reimbursable settings.

26           (g)     Examine any regulatory changes recommended by licensing and registration  
27 entities at the division of professional licensure, and the department of public health, and offer  
28 public written assessments to these entities during the regulatory process that includes the effect  
29 of these requirements on the existing workforce and the future workforce pipeline.

30           (h)     Examine existing training funds across state and federal agencies, including but  
31 not limited to, the executive office of labor and workforce development, the Commonwealth  
32 Corporation, the executive office of education, the executive office of health and human services

33 and its constituent agencies, and make recommendations on ways to leverage funding and  
34 resources to focus on existing and needed training programs for the field.

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

39 (j) Examine existing loan forgiveness opportunities for practitioners and make  
40 recommendations on ways to expand current initiatives.

41 (k) Establish an advisory committee, to be cochaired by a person appointed by the  
42 department of higher education and a person appointed by the Association for Behavioral  
43 Healthcare, and members selected by the commissioner, including, but not limited to,  
44 representation from each of the following entities: the executive office of health and human  
45 services, the department of public health, the department of mental health, Blue Cross and Blue  
46 Shield of Massachusetts, the Massachusetts Association of Health Plans, the executive office of  
47 labor and workforce development, NAMI Massachusetts, the Massachusetts Organization for  
48 Addiction Recovery, the Parent Professional Advocacy League, the Massachusetts Association  
49 for Behavioral Health Systems, the National Association of Social Workers-Massachusetts, the  
50 Massachusetts Psychological Association, the Massachusetts Mental Health Counselors  
51 Association, and the Massachusetts for Mental Health. The advisory committee shall meet  
52 regularly and discuss the state of the behavioral workforce in Massachusetts.

53           (1)     Create and fund a technical assistance center that funds special projects and  
54 assistance for value-based purchasing and care preparation and behavioral health and primary  
55 care integration.

56           (m)    Examine other matters deemed appropriate by the Center.