SENATE DOCKET, NO. 589 FILED ON: 1/17/2023

SENATE . . . . . No. 1269

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Marc R. Pacheco

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 creating a pilot program to transfer high acuity behavioral health and dual diagnosis patients away from overcrowded emergency departments.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	
Marc R. Pacheco	*Third Bristol and Plymouth*	
Adam J. Scanlon	*14th Bristol*	*1/30/2023*
Jack Patrick Lewis	*7th Middlesex*	*1/30/2023*
Paul R. Feeney	*Bristol and Norfolk*	*1/30/2023*
James B. Eldridge	*Middlesex and Worcester*	*2/21/2023*
Carol A. Doherty	*3rd Bristol*	*3/23/2023*

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SENATE . . . . . No. 1269

By Mr. Pacheco, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 1269) of Marc R. Pacheco, Adam Scanlon, Jack Patrick Lewis, Paul R. Feeney and others for legislation relative to creating a pilot program to transfer high acuity behavioral health and dual diagnosis patients away from overcrowded emergency departments. Mental Health, Substance Use and Recovery.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE SENATE, NO. *1311* OF 2021-2022.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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

An Act relative to creating a pilot program to transfer high acuity behavioral health and dual diagnosis patients away from overcrowded emergency departments.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

Chapter 19 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2020 Official Edition, is hereby amended by adding the following sections at the end thereof:-

Section XX. For the purposes of this section, the term “dual diagnosis” shall mean a mental illness and a substance use disorder occurring simultaneously.

There shall be, on the campus of Taunton State Hospital, a Behavioral Health Emergency Department Relief Pilot Program to accept medically stable, high acuity behavioral health and dual diagnosis patients from emergency departments in the Southeast region. Medically stable patients presenting in an Emergency Department with a high acuity behavioral health condition

or who have a dual diagnosis should be transferred to this pilot program if another appropriate setting cannot be located within four hours of admission to the emergency department. Patients admitted to the pilot program will be cared for until an appropriate placement is found that meets the patients' needs, which shall be no more than fourteen days following admission to the pilot program. The program shall be operated by the department and staffed by the department registered nurses, psychiatrists and other staff as needed to provide appropriate care, with program protocols and a staffing plan to be developed during the first six months following passage of this legislation by a committee including the department, the department of public health, the national alliance on mental illness, the Massachusetts Nurses Association and the emergency nurses association. For the purposes of this pilot program, Taunton State Hospital shall be allowed to accept patients classified under Section 12 of Chapter 123 of the General Laws. The pilot program shall operate for a period of two years, with a report to be filed by the department with the Joint Committee on Mental Health, Substance Use and Recovery during year two of the program, to evaluate the success of the program in decreasing emergency department overcrowding in the Southeast Region, and the quality of care provided in the program. The report shall be drafted by an independent entity, utilizing data from the department and the local hospitals in the Southeast Region.