SENATE DOCKET, NO. 1917 FILED ON: 1/17/2025

SENATE . . . . . No. 1392

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Julian Cyr

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 resolve:

Resolve providing for a study and recommendations by a special commission relative to access to behavioral health services for children and families in the commonwealth.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	
Julian Cyr	*Cape and Islands*	
Joanne M. Comerford	*Hampshire, Franklin and Worcester*	*2/27/2025*

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By Mr. Cyr, a petition (accompanied by resolve, Senate, No. 1392) of Julian Cyr and Joanne M. Comerford that provisions be made for a special commission to study available behavioral health services and to make recommendations for improving access to behavioral health services for children and families in the commonwealth. Mental Health, Substance Use and Recovery.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)

Resolve providing for a study and recommendations by a special commission relative to access to behavioral health services for children and families in the commonwealth.

Resolved, that there shall be a special commission to study available behavioral health services and to make recommendations for improving access to behavioral health services for children and families in the commonwealth.

The commission shall consist of: the secretary of health and human services or a designee, who shall serve as chair; the assistant secretary of MassHealth or a designee; the commissioner of mental health or a designee; the commissioner of children and families or a designee; the commissioner of early education and care or a designee; the commissioner of elementary and secondary education or a designee, the chairs of the joint committee on mental health, substance use and recovery or their designees; the chairs of the joint committee on children, families and persons with disabilities or their designees; a representative from the office of the child advocate; a representative of the Association for Behavioral Healthcare, Inc.; a representative of the Children's League of Massachusetts; a representative of the Children's Mental Health Campaign; a representative of Health Law Advocates' Mental Health Advocacy

14 Program for Kids; a representative of the Massachusetts Association of Behavioral Health
15 Systems; a representative of the Massachusetts Health and Hospital Association; a
16 representative of the Massachusetts Medical Society, a representative of the Massachusetts
17 Association for Mental Health; a representative of the Parent/Professional League; and 3
18 individuals to be appointed by the chair, 1 of whom shall be a parent with experience seeking
19 behavioral health services for a child enrolled in MassHealth; 1 of whom shall be a parent with
20 experience seeking services for a child from the department of mental health, 1 of whom shall be
21 a family member or caregiver of a child who has received behavioral health services while in the
22 care of the department of children and families.

23 All appointments shall be made not later than 30 days after the effective date of this
24 resolve. The chair shall meet with the commission not later than 60 days after the effective date
25 of this resolve.

26 The commission shall: (i) identify the range of behavioral health services, including
27 services and treatment for substance use disorder, available to children and adolescents under the
28 age of 22 in the commonwealth; (ii) identify, and quantify to the extent possible, the challenges
29 children, adolescents, and families face in seeking behavioral health services across the
30 commonwealth, including but not limited to, access, affordability, cost-sharing, administrative
31 requirements, programmatic complexities, insurance or state program denials, staffing, wait
32 times and geography; (iii) review the application process and eligibility criteria for children and
33 adolescents seeking services through the department of mental health; (iv) review policies and
34 adherence to policies that seek to ensure quality behavioral health care for children and
35 adolescents in the care of the department of children and families; (v) review access challenges
36 specific to commercial insurance coverage for behavioral health services for children and

37 adolescents, including but not limited to, clarity regarding services covered, prior authorization,
38 cost-sharing, billing complexities and administrative requirements; (vi) review state funding
39 dedicated to behavioral health services for children across state agencies and examine the impact
40 of how those funds are used to maximize the delivery of services and available federal resources;
41 and (vii) examine other matters deemed relevant by the commission. Based on the commission's
42 finding, the commission shall make recommendations for improving access to behavioral health
43 services for children and adolescents in the commonwealth through suggested policy changes,
44 proposed funding modifications, and the development of a 5-year strategic plan for the delivery
45 of behavioral health services for children and families that considers all providers and payers.

46 The commission shall submit its findings, recommendations, and strategic plan to the
47 clerks of the senate and the house of representatives, the joint committee on mental health,
48 substance use and recovery, the joint committee on children, family and persons with disabilities,
49 the joint committee on health care financing, and the senate and house committees on ways and
50 means not later than December 31, 2027. The secretary of health and human services shall make
51 the report publicly available on the website of the executive office of health and human services.