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SENATE . . . . . No. 2322

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand Twelve

An Act authorizing the Department of Mental Health to establish teen drop in centers.

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

SECTION 1. Chapter 19 of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after section 24 the following section:-

Section 25. The department shall establish 5 pilot teen mental health drop-in centers for youths age 10 to 20 pursuant to this section. The centers shall provide free, confidential access to licensed mental health professionals as well as trained peer counselors. Centers shall include a "safe room", so called, and an internet-connected computer station for youths who wish to research their condition and find communities online. Centers shall be open for minimum of four hours after the close of the local middle and high school.

Centers shall provide no less than 10 hours per week of access to a licensed mental health professional with experience in treating youth. Centers shall provide access to no less than 2 paid peer counselors who have had at least 10 hours of training. Centers shall provide referrals for services beyond their scope, such as inpatient care and substance abuse programs.

13 The centers host sites shall be selected from among existing youth and community
14 centers pursuant to a request for proposals. Such requests shall include:-

15 (a) data showing that their communities have a substantial unmet need for teen mental
16 health services;

17 (b) information on the accessibility of the facilities to youth without cars;

18 (c) specific plans for outreach, and a demonstrated ability to publicize their services to
19 local youth; and

20 (d) information on the center's advisory board, which shall include 15 members, at least 8
21 of whom shall be under age 20. The advisory boards shall design the layout of centers and meet
22 annually to discuss improvements. Applicants shall certify that youth members had a central role
23 in center design, including the layout of the safe room and other rooms.

24 Selections of centers from among those applying shall be based on the recommendations
25 of a screening board established by the department, which shall include at least one mental health
26 professional, a community member from each county, and a majority of members under age 20,
27 half of whom shall be nominated by Teens Leading The Way.