

## **Joint Committee on Health Care Financing 2025-2026 (194th) Bill Summary**

<b><u>Bill Number:</u></b>	House, No. 1419
<b><u>Title:</u></b>	AN ACT RELATIVE TO PHARMACY DESERTS
<b><u>Sponsor:</u></b>	Representative Christopher J. Worrell (Dorchester)
<b><u>Hearing Date:</u></b>	June 2, 2025 (Report by August 1, 2025)
<b><u>Reporting Deadline:</u></b>	August 1, 2025
<b><u>Prior History:</u></b>	N/A
<b><u>Similar Matters:</u></b>	S858 (Edwards –Similar, Health Care Financing)

### **Current Law:**

**Chapter 6D of the General Laws** establishes the Health Policy Commission (HPC) as an independent agency within the Executive Office of Administration and Finance to set health care cost growth goals, enhance provider organization transparency, monitor and review marketplace changes, and establish a health care cost growth benchmark for the average growth in total health care expenditures.

**M.G.L. Chapter 6D § 22** establishes the office of health resource planning within the Health Policy Commission.

### **Summary:**

This legislation tasks the office of health resource planning with conducting a focused assessment of the supply, distribution, and capacity of pharmacy and pharmacological services across Massachusetts. As part of this effort, the office must identify existing and potential “pharmacy deserts”—areas with limited access to pharmacies due to geographic distance, travel time and lack of transportation options. Pharmacy deserts are defined as locations where the nearest pharmacy is more than 1 mile away in urban areas, 5 miles in suburban areas, or 10 miles in rural areas, or where residents face travel times exceeding 15 minutes by car or 30 minutes by public transportation, and where at least 20% of the population lacks access to a private vehicle. By September 1, 2026, the office must present its findings to the Health Policy Commission and submit a detailed report to the clerks of the senate and house of representatives, the house and senate committees on ways and means, the joint committee on health care financing, the center for health information and analysis, the health policy commission and the department of public health. This report will include assessments of affected neighborhoods and populations, access to medications, healthcare outcomes, transportation barriers, healthcare costs and the role of pharmacy benefit manager practices in pharmacy closures. The report must also provide policy recommendations to mitigate existing pharmacy deserts and prevent the emergence of new ones.