

Committee on Public Health

Bill Summary

Bill No.	H2529
Sponsor:	Representative Lindsay N. Sabadosa
Title:	<i>An Act to create equitable approaches to public health</i>
Committee:	Public Health
Hearing Date:	July 10, 2025
Similar Matters:	None
Prior History:	Refile of H2264 of 2023-2024; Referred to Committee on Public Health; Accompanied S1407; Favorable; Referred to Committee on Health Care Financing; Study.
Reporting Deadline:	September 8, 2025

Current Law:

- **M.G.L. Chapter 6A** pertains to executive offices.

Summary:

This bill requires the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) to establish a grant program to increase the availability of non-law enforcement, unarmed community-based response options for emergency calls.

SECTION 1 amends M.G.L. Chapter 6A by inserting a new section, 16CC, which would require the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) to establish and oversee the Equitable Approaches to Public Health grant program in order to improve community-based responses to emergency calls. The grant program aims to do the following:

- make competitive grants for eligible applicants based on a mission of providing community support options and reducing government use of force in situations that do not necessitate the presence of law enforcement;
- complete grant performance evaluations in a timely manner to assess outcomes and costs of funded programs; and
- establish a board of community-based stakeholders to assist in grant making criteria and decisions, consisting of:
 - the Executive Director of the Massachusetts chapter of the National Association of Social Workers (or designee)
 - the Secretary of the Department of Mental Health (or designee)

- the Director of the Greater Boston Association of Black Social Workers (or designee)
- the Director of the Massachusetts Peer Support Network
- the Director of the Western Massachusetts Learning Community (or designee)
- a consumer of services of the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute
- a consumer of services of the Massachusetts Office of Addiction and Recovery
- the Director of Jane Doe, Inc. (or designee)

SECTION 2 outlines grant eligibility criteria, requiring participating entities to be in partnership with either a unit of local government, a community-based organization, or, if applicable, a non-profit, higher education institution, or community health organization.

SECTION 3 outlines grant application requirements, all of which must be submitted to the Executive Office of Health and Human Services.

SECTION 4 outlines services and projects eligible partners may utilize grant funds for.

SECTION 5 prohibits said grant funds from state, local or tribal law enforcement agencies.

SECTION 6 requires the Commonwealth to enter into a contract with an independent entity or organization in order to evaluate the effects of the program on: emergency department visits, use of ambulatory services, hospitalizations, the involvement of law enforcement in mental health or substance use disorder crisis events, or any other relevant outcomes.

Partnership and evaluation should begin no later than 4 fiscal quarters after the board begins dispensing grants.

This partner entity or organization's governing board must consist of all or in part community members who either live in communities with disproportionate police presence or have been formerly incarcerated themselves.

SECTION 7 requires each grant recipient to submit an annual report to the EOHHS that details use of funds and specified outcomes and supporting information.

SECTION 8 requires the EOHHS to complete and submit to the Legislature an evaluation of implementation, outcomes, and best practices from the grant program, along with recommended next steps by October 1, 2028.