

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 1737**

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

PRESENTED BY:

***Elizabeth A. Malia***

*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 establishing a behavioral health workforce commission.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
<i>Elizabeth A. Malia</i>	<i>11th Suffolk</i>
<i>Mindy Domb</i>	<i>3rd Hampshire</i>
<i>Nika C. Elugardo</i>	<i>15th Suffolk</i>
<i>Stephan Hay</i>	<i>3rd Worcester</i>
<i>Natalie M. Higgins</i>	<i>4th Worcester</i>
<i>Patrick Joseph Kearney</i>	<i>4th Plymouth</i>
<i>David Henry Argosky LeBoeuf</i>	<i>17th Worcester</i>
<i>Rebecca L. Rausch</i>	<i>Norfolk, Bristol and Middlesex</i>
<i>José F. Tosado</i>	<i>9th Hampden</i>
<i>Dean A. Tran</i>	<i>Worcester and Middlesex</i>
<i>Susannah M. Whipps</i>	<i>2nd Franklin</i>
<i>Bud L. Williams</i>	<i>11th Hampden</i>
<i>Jonathan D. Zlotnik</i>	<i>2nd Worcester</i>

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 1737**

By Ms. Malia of Boston, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 1737) of Elizabeth A. Malia and others relative to establishing a behavioral health workforce commission. Mental Health, Substance Use and Recovery.

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-First General Court  
(2019-2020)**

An Act establishing a behavioral health workforce commission.

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

1           There shall be a behavioral health workforce commission to study workforce needs of the  
2 behavioral health system in the commonwealth and to identify reasons for behavioral health  
3 workforce shortages, including shortages in both inpatient and community-based settings.

4           The commission shall issue a report that shall include, but not be limited to, a review of  
5 and recommendations regarding: 1) the expansion of and funding mechanisms for loan  
6 forgiveness and scholarship programs for all providers in the behavioral health field, regardless  
7 of if they practice in a health professional shortage area; 2) the inclusion of behavioral health  
8 curriculum earlier in medical, nursing, and other educational programs; 3) the limited numbers of  
9 slots at associates and bachelors level registered nurse programs, and barriers limiting the  
10 expansion of these programs; 4) the creation of programs to encourage registered nurses to work  
11 in psychiatric settings, including the feasibility of establishing internships and fellowships in  
12 psychiatric nursing; 5) increasing the number of psychiatric clinical sites for nursing students;

13 6)increasing training for behavioral health providers to treat severe mental illness and substance  
14 use disorders; 7) the expansion of scope of practice for psychiatric nurse mental health clinical  
15 specialists and psychiatric nurse practitioners to ease the shortage of psychiatrists in inpatient  
16 settings by allowing all providers to work at the top of their license; and 8) the impact of  
17 commercial and public behavioral health rates on the ability to recruit and retain behavioral  
18 health providers.

19         The commission shall consist of 24 members: the secretary of health and human services  
20 or a designee, who shall serve as chair, the commissioner of mental health or a designee, the  
21 commissioner of public health or a designee, the director of the office of Medicaid or a designee,  
22 the commissioner of the department of higher education or a designee, and 1 representative from  
23 each of the following organizations: the Massachusetts Psychiatric Society, the Massachusetts  
24 Medical Society, the Massachusetts Association of Advanced Practice Psychiatric Nurses, the  
25 Massachusetts chapter of the National Association of Social Workers, the Massachusetts  
26 Psychological Association, the Massachusetts Society of Addiction Medicine, the American  
27 Nurses Association Massachusetts, the Organization of Nurse Leaders, the Massachusetts  
28 Association of Advanced Practice Psychiatric Nurses, the Massachusetts Health and Hospital  
29 Association, the Association of Behavioral Healthcare, the Massachusetts Association of  
30 Behavioral Health Systems, the Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers, the  
31 Massachusetts Organization for Addiction Recovery, the Massachusetts Association for Mental  
32 Health, the National Alliance on Mental Illness of Massachusetts, the Children’s Mental Health  
33 Campaign, the Massachusetts Association of Health Plans, and the Blue Cross Blue Shield of  
34 Massachusetts.

35           The commission shall file a report on its findings and recommendations, together with  
36 any recommendations for legislation, with the clerks of the house of representatives and the  
37 senate no later than 1 year from the effective date of this act.