

SENATE No. 2543

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninetieth General Court
(2017-2018)**

An Act creating Autism teams in hospitals.

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

1 Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, within one year of the date of
2 enactment, the executive office of health and human services shall create and maintain an
3 integrated state plan to develop training and education as well as standards of care by appropriate
4 healthcare providers related to the diagnosis, treatment, and care of patients with intellectual and
5 developmental disabilities, including autism spectrum disorders. The plan should include
6 implementation steps and recommendations from the advisory committee on intellectual and
7 developmental disabilities that includes, but is not limited to: (1) continuing education
8 requirements for applicable healthcare providers related to diagnosis, treatment, and care of
9 patients with intellectual and developmental disabilities, including autism spectrum disorders; (2)
10 implementation of a strategy for the adoption of standards for improving assessment and
11 diagnosis of intellectual and developmental disabilities, including autism spectrum disorders, for
12 patients during routine outpatient primary care examinations; and (3) coordination with
13 applicable state licensure boards, as recommended by the advisory committee on intellectual and
14 developmental disabilities, the adoption of appropriate continuing education requirements related

15 to intellectual and developmental disabilities, including autism spectrum disorders, as part of
16 licensure renewals.

17 Within six months of the date of enactment, there is hereby established an advisory
18 committee on intellectual and developmental disabilities, including autism spectrum disorders.
19 Said advisory committee shall be comprised of the following experts: (i) a designee of the
20 secretary of health and human services; (ii) a designee of the commissioner of public health; (iii)
21 two health care providers with expertise in the diagnosis, treatment, and care of patients with
22 intellectual and developmental disabilities, including autism spectrum disorders; (iv) two patient
23 advocates or family members of those with intellectual and developmental disabilities, including
24 autism spectrum disorders; and (v) five statewide trade organizations that include the Arc of
25 Massachusetts, the Massachusetts Health and Hospital Association, the Massachusetts Medical
26 Society, and Massachusetts Psychiatric Society, and the Massachusetts Psychological
27 Association. The advisory council shall develop recommendations for statewide standards for
28 healthcare professionals regarding diagnosis, treatment, and care for patients with intellectual
29 and developmental disabilities, including but not limited to, autism spectrum disorders. Said
30 standards shall include recommendations for training of healthcare providers, including but not
31 limited to, physicians, psychologists, psychiatrists, physician assistants, registered nurses, and
32 advanced practice registered nurses.