

SENATE No. 2615

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the One Hundred and Ninety-Second General Court
(2021-2022)

SENATE, January 10, 2022.

The committee on Public Health, to whom was referred the petitions (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 1466) of Jason M. Lewis, Michael O. Moore, Joanne M. Comerford, James B. Eldridge and other members of the Senate for legislation to establish a voluntary training program in best practices for the care of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities; and (accompanied by bill, House, No. 2279) of Carolyn C. Dykema and others that the Department of Public Health establish a voluntary certification training program for care of certain patients with intellectual and developmental disabilities including autism, reports the accompanying bill (Senate, No. 2615).

For the committee,
Joanne M. Comerford

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An Act supporting individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities including autism.

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

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 17 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2020 Official Edition,
2 is hereby amended by adding the following section:-

3 Section 22.

4 (a) As used in this section, the following words shall have the following meanings, unless
5 the context clearly requires otherwise:

6 “Certified training program”, a voluntary training and accreditation program, accredited
7 by the department pursuant to this section, for medical professionals focusing on instruction of
8 best practices for the treatment and care of patients with intellectual and developmental
9 disabilities, including autism spectrum disorders.

10 “Department”, the department of public health.

11 “Director”, the director of the department of family health and nutrition, within the
12 department of public health.

13 “Operation House Call”, an existing program, developed by The Arc of Massachusetts,
14 which teaches young medical professionals essential skills to enhance the health care of persons
15 with autism and other intellectual and developmental disabilities that shall serve as the baseline
16 training model.

17 “School” any institution of higher education providing a course of study for students in
18 medicine or related fields.

19 (b) In conjunction with the department of developmental services, and the Arc of
20 Massachusetts, the department shall establish and provide for the administration of a voluntary
21 certified training program for:

22 (i) medical schools seeking certification under subsection (d)

23 (ii) nursing schools seeking certification under subsection (d)

24 (iii) dental schools seeking certification under subsection (d)

25 (iv) other institutions of higher education with a course of study for medical practitioners,
26 including, but not limited to, physicians assistants, dieticians, nutritionists, physical therapists,
27 dental hygienists, allied mental health and human service professionals seeking certification
28 under subsection (d).

29 (c) The certified program established pursuant to this section shall:

30 (i) be structured based upon Operation House Call;

31 (ii) be offered to participating students on a voluntary basis that is separate from their
32 required course of study; and

33 (iii) maintain recognized standards and practices that:

34 (A) uphold industry standards for instructing healthcare professionals on best practices
35 for the treatment and care for patients with intellectual and developmental disabilities, including
36 but not limited to autism spectrum disorders;

37 (B) include didactic classroom instruction, experiential learning, and online learning,
38 totaling not less than 6 hours; and

39 (C) address the health care needs of patients with intersecting marginalized identities,
40 including those belonging to minority race or ethnic groups, through training content and
41 recruitment of diverse program participants.

42 (d) The department shall certify that a school offers a certified training program, as
43 described in subsection (c), upon receipt and review that:

44 (i) the school has successfully delivered the certified training program to a sufficient
45 number of participating students as mutually agreed upon by the institution and the provider of
46 the training; and

47 (ii) that the program meets the minimum standards and practices, as provided in
48 subsection (c).

49 (e) The director shall periodically evaluate the quality of training being provided to
50 schools seeking certification and the integrity and efficacy of the accreditation program.

51 (f) The department shall prepare, publish and disseminate a list of schools certified
52 pursuant to this section; provided, however, that the list shall be updated annually. The list shall

- 53 be published in a location that is accessible to prospective students seeking to apply to attend
- 54 schools in the medical field or related fields.