

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 1720**

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

PRESENTED BY:

***Patricia A. Haddad***

*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 relative to creating a pilot program to transfer high acuity behavioral health and dual diagnosis patients away from overcrowded emergency departments.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
<i>Patricia A. Haddad</i>	<i>5th Bristol</i>
<i>Kimberly N. Ferguson</i>	<i>1st Worcester</i>
<i>Brian M. Ashe</i>	<i>2nd Hampden</i>
<i>Michael D. Brady</i>	<i>Second Plymouth and Bristol</i>
<i>Peter Capano</i>	<i>11th Essex</i>
<i>Tackey Chan</i>	<i>2nd Norfolk</i>
<i>Daniel R. Cullinane</i>	<i>12th Suffolk</i>
<i>Daniel M. Donahue</i>	<i>16th Worcester</i>
<i>James B. Eldridge</i>	<i>Middlesex and Worcester</i>
<i>Dylan A. Fernandes</i>	<i>Barnstable, Dukes and Nantucket</i>
<i>Sean Garballey</i>	<i>23rd Middlesex</i>
<i>Carlos Gonzalez</i>	<i>10th Hampden</i>
<i>James K. Hawkins</i>	<i>2nd Bristol</i>
<i>Jonathan Hecht</i>	<i>29th Middlesex</i>
<i>Natalie M. Higgins</i>	<i>4th Worcester</i>
<i>Kate Hogan</i>	<i>3rd Middlesex</i>
<i>Randy Hunt</i>	<i>5th Barnstable</i>

<i>Hannah Kane</i>	<i>11th Worcester</i>
<i>David Henry Argosky LeBoeuf</i>	<i>17th Worcester</i>
<i>Jack Patrick Lewis</i>	<i>7th Middlesex</i>
<i>Harold P. Naughton, Jr.</i>	<i>12th Worcester</i>
<i>Patrick M. O'Connor</i>	<i>Plymouth and Norfolk</i>
<i>Marc R. Pacheco</i>	<i>First Plymouth and Bristol</i>
<i>Denise Provost</i>	<i>27th Middlesex</i>
<i>Rebecca L. Rausch</i>	<i>Norfolk, Bristol and Middlesex</i>
<i>David Allen Robertson</i>	<i>19th Middlesex</i>
<i>Maria Duaine Robinson</i>	<i>6th Middlesex</i>
<i>Daniel J. Ryan</i>	<i>2nd Suffolk</i>
<i>Walter F. Timilty</i>	<i>Norfolk, Bristol and Plymouth</i>
<i>José F. Tosado</i>	<i>9th Hampden</i>
<i>Steven Ultrino</i>	<i>33rd Middlesex</i>
<i>John C. Velis</i>	<i>4th Hampden</i>
<i>Bud L. Williams</i>	<i>11th Hampden</i>

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 1720**

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By Mrs. Haddad of Somerset, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 1720) of Patricia A. Haddad and others relative to creating a pilot program to transfer high acuity behavioral health and dual diagnosis patients away from overcrowded emergency departments. Mental Health, Substance Use and Recovery.

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[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION  
SEE HOUSE, NO. 1064 OF 2017-2018.]

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

—————  
**In the One Hundred and Ninety-First General Court  
(2019-2020)**  
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An Act relative to creating a pilot program to transfer high acuity behavioral health and dual diagnosis patients away from overcrowded emergency departments.

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

1 Chapter 19 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2016 Official Edition, is hereby  
2 amended by adding the following sections at the end thereof: -

3 Section XX. For the purposes of this section, the term “dual diagnosis” shall mean a  
4 mental illness and a substance abuse problem occurring simultaneously.

5 There shall be, on the campus of Taunton State Hospital, a Behavioral Health Emergency  
6 Department Relief Pilot Program to accept medically stable, high acuity behavioral health and  
7 dual diagnosis patients from emergency departments in the Southeast region. Medically stable  
8 patients presenting in an Emergency Department with a high acuity behavioral health condition

9 or who have a dual diagnosis should be transferred to this pilot program if another appropriate  
10 setting cannot be located within four hours of admission to the emergency department. Patients  
11 admitted to the pilot program will be cared for until an appropriate placement is found that meets  
12 the patients' needs, which shall be no more than fourteen days following admission to the pilot  
13 program. The program shall be operated by the department and staffed by the department  
14 registered nurses, psychiatrists and other staff as needed to provide appropriate care, with  
15 program protocols and a staffing plan to be developed during the first six months following  
16 passage of this legislation by a committee including the department, the department of public  
17 health, the national alliance on mental illness, the Massachusetts Nurses Association and the  
18 emergency nurses association. For the purposes of this pilot program, Taunton State Hospital  
19 shall be allowed to accept patients classified under Section 12 of Chapter 123 of the General  
20 Laws. The pilot program shall operate for a period of two years, with a report to be filed by the  
21 department with the Joint Committee on Mental Health during year two of the program, to  
22 evaluate the success of the program in decreasing emergency department overcrowding in the  
23 Southeast Region, and the quality of care provided in the program. The report shall be drafted  
24 by an independent entity, utilizing data from the department and the local hospitals in the  
25 Southeast Region.