

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 4740**

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The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

*Jamie Zahlaway Belsito and Joan B. Lovely*

*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 maternal mental and behavioral health care workforce grants.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Jamie Zahlaway Belsito</i>	<i>4th Essex</i>	<i>4/7/2022</i>
<i>Joan B. Lovely</i>	<i>Second Essex</i>	<i>4/11/2022</i>

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 4740**

By Representative Belsito of Topsfield and Senator Lovely, a joint petition (subject to Joint Rule 12) of Jamie Zahlaway Belsito and Joan B. Lovely for legislation to establish maternal mental and behavioral health care workforce grants. Mental Health, Substance Use and Recovery.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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

An Act establishing maternal mental and behavioral health care workforce grants.

*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 6A of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after section 16CC the  
2 following section:-

3 Section 16DD. (a) As used in this section, the following words shall, unless the context  
4 requires otherwise, have the following meanings:-

5 “Health professional shortage area”, a specific geographic area, specific population group  
6 or specific facility federally designated as having a critical shortage of primary, dental, or mental  
7 health care providers.

8 “Maternal healthcare desert”, a region where the population has inadequate access to  
9 maternal healthcare.

10 “Maternal mental and behavioral health care workforce”, mental or behavioral health care  
11 providers who focus on maternal or perinatal health.

12 “Medically underserved populations”, federally designated populations that have too few  
13 primary care providers, high infant mortality, high poverty or high elderly population.

14 “Mental or behavioral health care provider”, a health care provider in the field of mental  
15 or behavioral health, including substance use disorders, acting in accordance with the laws of the  
16 commonwealth.

17 “Secretary”, the secretary of health and human services.

18 (b) The secretary may award grants to entities to establish or expand programs to grow  
19 and diversify the maternal mental and behavioral health care workforce.

20 (c) Recipients of grants under this section shall use the grants to grow and diversify the  
21 maternal mental and behavioral health care workforce by:

22 (1) establishing schools or programs that provide education and training to individuals  
23 seeking appropriate licensing or certification as mental or behavioral health care providers who  
24 will specialize in maternal mental health conditions or substance use disorders; or

25 (2) expanding the capacity of existing schools or programs described in paragraph (1) of  
26 this subsection, for the purposes of increasing the number of students enrolled in those schools or  
27 programs, including by awarding scholarships for students.

28 (d) In awarding grants under this section, the secretary shall give priority to any entity  
29 that:

30 (1) has demonstrated a commitment to recruiting and retaining students and faculty from  
31 medically underserved populations or maternal health care deserts;

32 (2) has developed a strategy to recruit and retain a diverse pool of students into the  
33 maternal mental and behavioral health care workforce program or school supported by funds  
34 received through the grant, particularly from medically underserved populations;

35 (3) has developed a strategy to recruit and retain students who plan to practice in a health  
36 professional shortage area;

37 (4) has developed a strategy to recruit and retain students who plan to practice in an area  
38 with significant racial, ethnic and rural disparities in maternal health outcomes, to the extent  
39 practicable; and

40 (5) includes in the standard curriculum for all students within the maternal mental and  
41 behavioral health care workforce program or school a bias, racism or discrimination training  
42 program that includes training on implicit bias and racism.

43 (e) The period of a grant awarded to an entity under this section shall be up to 5 years.

44 (f) To seek a grant under this section, an entity shall submit to the secretary an  
45 application at such time, in such manner and containing such information as the secretary may  
46 require.

47 (g) The secretary shall provide, directly or by contract, technical assistance to entities  
48 seeking or receiving a grant under this section on the development, use, evaluation and post-  
49 grant period sustainability of the maternal mental and behavioral health care workforce programs  
50 or schools proposed, established or expanded through the grant.

51 (h) The secretary shall collaborate with the executive office of labor and workforce  
52 development to develop maternal mental and behavioral health care workforce standards to  
53 measure the efficacy of grants awarded pursuant to this section.

54 (i) As a condition of receipt of a grant under this section for a maternal mental and  
55 behavioral health care workforce program or school, a recipient of funds shall agree to submit to  
56 the secretary an annual report on the activities conducted through the grant. The report shall  
57 include:

58 (1) the number and demographics of students participating in the program or school;

59 (2) the extent to which students in the program or school are entering careers in health  
60 professional shortage areas designated by the commonwealth, areas with significant racial and  
61 ethnic disparities in maternal health outcomes and maternal health care deserts to the extent such  
62 data are available; and

63 (3) whether the program or school has included in the standard curriculum for all students  
64 a bias, racism or discrimination training program that includes training on implicit bias and  
65 racism, and if so data on maternal mental and behavioral health care outcomes for patients  
66 belonging to medically underserved populations who receive treatment from such students.

67 (j) Not later than 4 years after the date of enactment of this section, the secretary shall  
68 prepare and submit to the clerks of the house of representatives and the senate, and post on the  
69 internet website of the department a report on the effectiveness of the grant program under this  
70 section at:

71 (1) recruiting students from medically underserved populations;

72           (2) increasing the number of mental or behavioral health care providers specializing in  
73 maternal mental health conditions or substance use disorders from medically underserved  
74 populations;

75           (3) increasing the number of mental or behavioral health care providers specializing in  
76 maternal mental health conditions or substance use disorders working in health professional  
77 shortage areas; and

78           (4) increasing the number of mental or behavioral health care providers specializing in  
79 maternal mental health conditions or substance use disorders working in areas with significant  
80 racial and ethnic disparities in maternal health outcomes, as well as maternal health care deserts  
81 and rural areas, to the extent such data are available.