

SENATE No. 1315

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Walter F. Timilty

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 pilot program to improve behavioral health access through collaboration of municipal law enforcement and behavioral health specialists.

PETITION OF:

NAME:

Walter F. Timilty

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

Norfolk, Bristol and Plymouth

SENATE No. 1315

By Mr. Timilty, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 1315) of Walter F. Timilty for legislation to establish a pilot program to improve behavioral health access through collaboration of municipal law enforcement and behavioral health specialists. Mental Health, Substance Use and Recovery.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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

An Act establishing a pilot program to improve behavioral health access through collaboration of municipal law enforcement and behavioral health specialists.

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 and subject to appropriation,
2 the department of public health shall establish a 2-year pilot program in a town selected from the
3 following Avon, Braintree, Canton, Milton, Randolph, Sharon, Stoughton, Easton, East
4 Bridgewater, or West Bridgewater, to embed behavioral health specialists based at community
5 health centers in surrounding communities, including but not limited to Manet Community
6 Health Center and Brockton Neighborhood Health Center, in the municipal law enforcement
7 department. The town selected by the department of public health shall sign a memorandum of
8 understanding with the department of public health prior to the commencement of said pilot
9 program. The memorandum of understanding shall be approved by the participating
10 municipality, the department of public health, and the participating community health center.

11 The pilot program shall include but not be limited to, behavioral health specialists
12 assisting municipal law enforcement officers with responding to emergency calls from the
13 public, and behavioral health specialists collaborating with the municipal law enforcement
14 department to develop protocols for responding to emergency calls from persons requiring
15 immediate behavioral health care.

16 The pilot program shall expand access to behavioral health care and greater long-term
17 referrals to care via behavioral health specialists providing assistance to municipal law
18 enforcement officers in response to emergency calls from the public involving persons
19 experiencing a behavioral health crisis. Behavioral health specialists shall not respond to an
20 emergency call without a municipal law enforcement officer.

21 The pilot program shall establish educational programing for municipal law enforcement
22 officers in the areas of mental health, community policing and serving individuals with
23 disabilities. The pilot program shall include a team-based approach in development of the pilot
24 program and establishing protocols and training in relation to responding to emergency calls
25 from persons requiring immediate behavioral health care.

26 The department of public health shall report not later than 12 months after the effective
27 date of this act and annually thereafter to the house and senate committees on ways and means,
28 the joint committee on public health, and the joint committee on public safety and homeland
29 security, the results of the pilot program and any identified barriers and challenges to
30 establishing said program and response measures to promote public safety.