

SENATE No. 2970

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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In the One Hundred and Ninety-Second General Court
(2021-2022)
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SENATE, July 7, 2022.

The committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security, to whom was referred the petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 1552) of Sonia Chang-Diaz, Jason M. Lewis, Jack Patrick Lewis, Joanne M. Comerford and other members of the General Court for legislation to create alternatives for community emergency services, reports the accompanying bill (Senate, No. 2970).

For the committee,
Walter F. Timilty

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An Act to create alternatives for community emergency services.

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 shall be amended by inserting the following new
2 section:-

3 Section 18AA. (a) The executive office of public safety and security, in collaboration
4 with the department of public health and the department of mental health, shall establish and
5 provide regulatory and administrative oversight to the behavioral health emergency response
6 pilot program, a co-response pilot program to increase the availability of behavioral health
7 clinicians to assist municipal police, fire and emergency medical professionals in emergency
8 response of 911 calls.

9 (b)(1) The program shall establish an application process for seeking a grant and
10 participating in the pilot program, criteria for municipal applicants, criteria for behavioral health
11 clinician staff, a process for determining approval for a grant application, and a data collection
12 system to understand outcomes of the co-response pilot program, including but not limited to the
13 number of individuals served, the demographics including age, gender, race, and ethnicity of

14 individuals served, the number and types of emergency calls, the number of emergency calls
15 requiring behavioral health clinician intervention, and behavioral health resources provided to
16 individuals served.

17 (b)(2) The program shall collaborate with a board of community-based behavioral health
18 organizations. The community board shall include the executive director of the national alliance
19 on mental illness Massachusetts or a designee, the president of the association for behavioral
20 healthcare or a designee, the executive director of the Massachusetts chapter of the national
21 association of social workers or a designee, the director of greater Boston association of black
22 social workers or a designee, the director of the Massachusetts peer support network or a
23 designee, the director of the western Massachusetts learning community or designee, and the
24 president of the Massachusetts league of community health centers or a designee.

25 (d) Behavioral health clinician staff shall not respond to an emergency call without a
26 municipal police, fire or emergency medical professional.

27 (e) The program shall establish an educational programing for municipal police, fire and
28 emergency medical professionals in the areas of behavioral health, community policing and
29 serving individuals with disabilities.

30 (f) The program shall report not later than 12 months after the effective date of this act
31 and annually thereafter to the house and senate committees on ways and means, the joint
32 committee on public health, and the joint committee on public safety and homeland security. The
33 report shall include but not be limited to an outline of grant allocation, the number of municipal
34 department participants, the number of behavioral health clinician staff, the data results of the

- 35 pilot program, identified barriers to establishing and maintaining the program, response measures
- 36 taken to promote public safety.