

SENATE No. 673

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

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 ensuring support groups are part of the pathway of care following the annual mental health wellness exam.

PETITION OF:

NAME:

Joan B. Lovely

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

Second Essex

SENATE No. 673

By Ms. Lovely, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 673) of Joan B. Lovely for legislation to ensure support groups are part of the pathway of care following the annual mental health wellness exam. Financial Services.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Third General Court
(2023-2024)**

An Act ensuring support groups are part of the pathway of care following the annual mental health wellness exam.

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. Section 47TT of Chapter 175, as appearing in the Official Edition, is hereby
2 amended by inserting in subsection (a) after the words “interviews and questions” the following
3 paragraph:

4 A list of appropriate resources for treatment shall be compiled by the department of
5 mental health. The list shall be required to be distributed to an individual at the time of the
6 mental health wellness examination, in both paper and electronic formats. The list shall be
7 reviewed and updated annually by the department.

8 SECTION 2. Section 47TT of Chapter 175, as appearing in the Official Edition, is hereby
9 further amended by inserting at the end thereof the following subsections:

10 (d) If a patient receives a mental health diagnosis resulting from the annual mental health
11 wellness examination, the provider must at that time provide a referral for the patient to seek

12 follow up care. This referral must be for a treatment option that can be accessed within six weeks
13 of the time of the examination. The referral could include but not be limited to individualized
14 didactic talk therapy or to an evidence-based support group.

15 (e) The executive office of health and human services shall annually assess the behavioral
16 healthcare workforce and resources available for treatment referrals and identify any existing
17 gaps. This shall include an analysis of the number of referrals to treatment made as a result of the
18 annual mental health wellness exam, as well as the number of referrals successfully accessed and
19 through which specific treatment was received. Such data shall be anonymized and aggregated to
20 ensure that individual patient outcomes would be kept confidential and not shared in any
21 circumstance. The results of this report shall be submitted annually by March 1st to the house
22 and senate committee on ways and means as well as the joint committee on mental health.

23 (f) As part of ensuring access to adequate behavioral healthcare, the state shall build upon
24 the network of community behavioral health centers and shall establish, subject to appropriation,
25 a network of evidence-based support groups that shall increase access to behavioral healthcare
26 services following from referrals made as part of the annual mental health wellness examination.