



Danna E. Mauch, PhD
President and CEO

Ambassador (ret.) Barry B. White
Chairperson of MAMH Board of Directors

August 2, 2022

The Honorable Charles D. Baker, Jr.
Governor, Commonwealth of Massachusetts
24 Beacon Street, Room 280
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Governor Baker:

Re: Please sign S.3097, the Mental Health Omnibus Bill, into law

On behalf of the Massachusetts Association for Mental Health (MAMH), we are extremely pleased to have the opportunity to ask you to sign S.3097, An Act addressing barriers to care for mental health, into law. As you know, this omnibus bill incorporates a range of critical and carefully considered provisions, many developed over a number of years. These measures will promote access to mental health care and address obstacles to the well being and recovery of youth and adults with behavioral health (BH) issues.

Throughout this legislative process, we have appreciated the careful work of you and your Administration in collaborating with key stakeholders to improve many of the bill's provisions. These efforts to build consensus and formulate doable reforms are an important reason for the bill's ultimate passage. Moreover, this collaborative approach has resulted in a bill that is vigorously supported by strong coalition of people and organizations across the Commonwealth. In recent days, we have been buoyed by the many, many supporters of the bill, from individuals with mental health experiences and their family members to service providers to advocates and political leaders.

While there is excitement about many of the bill's provisions, we list just a few here that we view as particularly significant:

- Reforms to address emergency department (ED) boarding including a youth ED boarding portal and a requirement for mental health professional presence in EDs;
- Preparation for the implementation of the 988 crisis line and ensuring the interoperability with 911 and 211;
- Mental health parity enforcement provisions that address long-standing weaknesses in existing parity law;
- Health insurance coverage for fundamental services including annual mental health wellness examinations, community based acute treatment for youth, collaborative care models, and BH emergency services;
- Establishment of school-based BH services, including a statewide program to implement BH services and supports in school districts;
- Establishment of an Office of Behavioral Health Promotion to implement and expand the work of the Commission on Community Behavioral Health Promotion and Prevention.

These are only some of the many substantial provisions in this omnibus bill. We hope you will take great satisfaction in the endorsement of this legislation in its entirety.

As we have said on other occasions, we have been fortunate to have your and your team's leadership on these issues during your tenure as Governor. If we can be of assistance on these or other matters, please do not hesitate to contact me.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Danna Mauch".

Danna Mauch, PhD
President and CEO, MAMH

c. The Honorable Marylou Sudders, Secretary of Health and Human Services, Commonwealth of Massachusetts; Tim Buckley, Chief of Staff, Office of the Governor; Katherine Holahan, Deputy Chief of Staff for Legislative Affairs, Office of the Governor; Bekah Diamond, Chief of Staff, EOHHS; Lauren Peters, Undersecretary for Health Policy, EOHHS; Robert McLaughlin, Legislative Director, EOHHS