

## 2021-2022 Legislative Priorities

MAMH's legislative agenda supports three main goals – *expanding access, decriminalizing mental health conditions, and promoting wellness*. With a focus on prevention and ongoing concerns of parity, MAMH staff and partners will work closely with legislators on bills to support each of these priorities, as follows:



### Expanding Access

#### **An Act to increase investment in behavioral health care in the Commonwealth | [S.1287](#) (Sen. Friedman)**

The behavioral health system has long been underfunded, with BIPOC left out of services at disproportionately high rates. This bill will increase investment in behavioral health care – 30% per year over three years, above baseline expenditures.

#### **An Act relative to mental health parity implementation | [S.675](#) (Sen. Friedman)**

There remains a stark lack of parity between behavioral health and physical health. This bill will improve enforcement of existing parity legislation and take steps to remove barriers to care.

#### **An Act to better coordinate suicide prevention services, behavioral health crisis care and emergency services through 988 implementation | [H.2081](#) (Rep. Decker) & [S.1274](#) (Sen. Cyr)**

More investment is needed in alternatives to law enforcement response to behavioral health/social service needs. This bill will create a 988 infrastructure that coordinates several parts of a cohesive crisis response and additional follow up.

#### **An Act relative to behavioral health urgent care | [H.2083](#) (Rep. Decker)**

Urgent care is typically not available for children and adults seeking help for behavioral health conditions. To implement a system of behavioral health urgent care, the Department of Public Health must develop a regulatory framework to ensure families in need of care during a behavioral health crisis can access the appropriate treatments.

### Decriminalizing Mental Health

#### **An Act to enhance 911 operations for behavioral health crisis response | [H.2461](#) (Rep. Fluker Oakley) & [S.1567](#) (Sen. Cyr)**

Our existing emergency response system must be better able to triage people in behavioral health crisis away from law enforcement. This bill will integrate behavioral health as a primary response type into the 911 system.

#### **An Act to ensure the constitutional rights and human dignity of prisoners on mental health watch | [H.2089](#) (Rep. Fluker Oakley) & [S.1283](#) (Sen. Eldridge)**

Trauma inflicted on prisoners, documented and disproportionate to those with mental health conditions, must end. This bill will address the egregious constitutional violations by DOC on prisoners on mental health suicide watch.

### Promoting Wellness

#### **An Act relative to screening for childhood trauma | [S.91](#) (Sen. Creem)**

Trauma remains a near universal experience for people involved in a broad range of systems of care. This bill establishes an advisory working group to update, amend, and select tools and protocols for the screening of children for trauma.

#### **An Act establishing an Office of Behavioral Health Promotion | [S.1275](#) (Sen. Cyr)**

In order to better provide mental and behavioral health care in the Commonwealth, more investment must be made in communicating/promoting available services. This bill establishes such an office within the Executive Office of Health and Human Services.

#### **An Act relative to the promotion of mental health education | [H.616](#) (Reps. Higgins and Gouveia) & [S.292](#) (Sen. Collins)**

A significant and growing number of youth experience mental health issues – a reality made worse by the current coronavirus pandemic. This bill will require K-12 schools to provide mental health education to students.

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