



## HEALTH CARE FOR ALL

### **HEALTH CARE FOR ALL URGES SENATORS TO PLEASE SUPPORT THESE FY 2019 SENATE BUDGET AMENDMENTS:**

#### **MONITORING ACCOUNTABLE CARE ORGANIZATION USE AND EFFICACY OF NON-MEDICAL SERVICES**

##### **● AMENDMENT #599 ● SPONSOR: SENATOR WELCH**

MassHealth's pioneer ACO program will be responsible for screening their 800,000 members for health-related social needs, such as housing insecurity, food insecurity, transportation needs, and exposure to violence – issues directly related to poor health outcomes, health inequities, and high health care costs. This amendment will ensure the availability of data from MassHealth about screening and interventions related to the social determinants of health (SDOH). This data is essential to understand the activities, successes, and challenges of how ACOs work to address SDOH. Data will also allow the public to assess the availability of social services and identify any gaps that may exist by region, population, or service type. ***Amendment #599 directs MassHealth to work to report data on ACO activities to address social determinants of health.***

##### **OFFICE OF HEALTH EQUITY ● AMENDMENT #491 ● SPONSOR: SENATOR LEWIS**

People of color have worse health outcomes on nearly every key health indicator in Massachusetts. Despite health care access expansion, people of color bear an unequal burden of disease and death that is costly and unconscionable. Funding an Office of Health Equity within EOHHS would strengthen efforts to reduce racial and ethnic disparities in health, and build a health care system with a focus on fairness and justice. ***Amendment #491 would allow existing EOHHS funds to support activities of an Office of Health Equity.***

##### **ACADEMIC DETAILING ● AMENDMENT #580 ● SPONSOR: SENATOR LEWIS**

Drug companies market their drugs directly to doctors by providing biased information promoting their most expensive drugs. To counter this, trained educators can offer objective information to educate doctors on the cost-effective uses of prescriptions, lowering the cost of health care. ***Amendment #580 increases funding for a physician education program on cost-effective utilization of prescription drugs to \$500,000.***

##### **SMOKING PREVENTION & CESSATION PROGRAMS ● AMENDMENT # 515 ● SPONSOR: SENATOR LEWIS**

The Massachusetts Tobacco Cessation & Prevention Program (MTCP) provides vital smoking prevention education and support for individuals struggling with addiction to tobacco products. Funding for this program has steadily decreased for the past 10 years, but MTCP needs this funding urgently. With Juul nicotine vaporizers and other flavored e-cigarettes heavily targeting young people,

schools and parents are calling for more help. Communities are also turning to MTCP for guidance on cannabis cafes' impact on the Smokefree Workplace Law, and more support is needed to help individuals trying to quit smoking as they struggle with other addictions. Because of the serious impact of smoking on oral health, this amendment is also a priority of the Oral Health Advocacy Task Force. ***Amendment #515 would restore funding to the FY2007 level of \$8,500,000 to provide adequate funding for this vital tobacco control program.***

**Children's Health Amendments (also priorities of the Children's Mental Health Campaign and the Children's Health Access Coalition):**

**PROTECTING MEDICALLY FRAGILE CHILDREN • AMENDMENT #620 • SPONSOR: SEN. FRIEDMAN**  
Continuous Skilled Nursing services provide medically necessary, critical care at home to the Commonwealth's most medically fragile children and adults who would otherwise need to be in a pediatric nursing home or hospital intensive care unit. The highly skilled workforce needed to care for this population has been depleted due to stagnant reimbursement rates over the last decade, resulting in a serious crisis for these families. Additional resources are needed to give families access to highly skilled nurses to provide the medically necessary care that they are authorized to receive. ***Amendment #620 would provide an additional \$16 million investment in the Continuous Skilled Nursing Program.***

**MENTAL HEALTH ADVOCACY PROGRAM FOR KIDS • AMENDMENT #414 • SPONSOR: SEN. CRIGHTON**  
The Mental Health Advocacy Program (MHAP) for Kids is a highly sought-after service piloted in the Lowell and Lynn Family Resource Centers (FRCs). MHAP for Kids improves the mental health of vulnerable youth who have been diverted from juvenile court or are already court-involved and have unmet mental health needs by providing these children with a legal advocate trained in removing barriers to treatment. MHAP for Kids attorneys aim to divert children from possible or further court involvement, help children thrive in school, reduce family conflict, and minimize costly emergency room treatment. The program is supported through a combination of public and private funds, and it is designed to be replicable in other FRCs. MHAP for Kids has expanded to the Boston FRC in 2018. ***Amendment #414 would increase funding by \$150,000 for the Mental Health Advocacy Program for Kids, providing \$200,000 to support this valuable program.***

**RETURN TO SCHOOL "BRIDGE" PROGRAMS • AMENDMENT #614 • SPONSOR: SEN. FRIEDMAN**  
The focus of Bridge programs is to ensure that youth who have been out of school for psychiatric or other hospitalizations can successfully transition back to school. Many districts already have these innovative programs, which provide emotional and academic support to students who have missed 5 or more days of school due to a mental health crisis, hospitalization or serious medical problem. Nationally, 50% of high school students with serious mental illness drop out of school. Bridge programs are changing that script for Massachusetts youth with a short-term intervention that has reduced drop-out rates to 8%. ***Amendment #614 would provide \$250,000 to maintain and expand these Bridge programs.***

## **PLEASE OPPOSE THESE HARMFUL AMENDMENTS:**

### **HEALTH CONNECTOR COVERAGE FOR NON-DISABLED ADULTS • AMENDMENT #484 • SPONSOR: SEN. TARR**

This amendment would reduce MassHealth eligibility for most non-disabled adults from 138% of the federal poverty level (FPL) to 100% FPL, shifting them to subsidized Health Connector coverage instead. While ConnectorCare is a valuable program that provides affordable, quality health coverage to most enrollees, we are concerned about the new barriers people would face in moving from MassHealth to ConnectorCare. This population could incur higher premium costs and face new enrollment and re-enrollment barriers. Some would lose coverage altogether due to differing eligibility rules between MassHealth and the Health Connector. ***Please oppose Amendment #484 which would disrupt coverage for 140,000 adult MassHealth enrollees.***

### **MORATORIUM ON MANDATED BENEFITS • AMENDMENT #496 • SPONSOR: SEN. TARR**

This amendment would impose a 5-year moratorium on new mandated health insurance benefits. A moratorium would hamper the ability of legislators to address future problems in health care coverage, including a potential federal repeal of the Affordable Care Act. The Center for Health Information and Analysis (CHIA) already conducts an independent review and evaluation of any proposed health benefit mandate before any legislative consideration, further rendering this amendment obsolete. ***Please oppose Amendment #496 and exclude a blanket moratorium on new mandated benefits from the FY18 budget.***

### **PRESCRIPTION DRUG COPAY COUPONS • AMENDMENTS #422 & #488 • SPONSORS: SEN. DEMACEDO & SEN. TARR**

Drug companies use discount “coupons” to entice consumers into purchasing more expensive brand-name drugs, when cheaper and equally-effective alternatives are available. When the coupons run out or expire, patients are left with high copays. Massachusetts had banned these coupons, and then temporarily authorized them several years ago. These amendments would further extend the authorization, which has already been delayed to 2019, another two years to 2021. ***Please oppose Amendments #422 and #488 to prevent pharmaceutical companies from using rebates and coupons to influence consumer choice and drive up health care spending.***

***Health Care For All promotes health justice in Massachusetts  
by working to reduce disparities and ensure coverage and access for all.***

For additional information, please contact  
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