

2023-2024 Legislative Session: Bills Where MAMH is Leading Advocacy Efforts



MAMH's legislative agenda supports three main goals – *expanding access, promoting well being, and legal reform*. With a focus on prevention and ongoing concerns about parity, MAMH is leading advocacy efforts to pass the following bills. This entails working with our champions in the State House to file legislation, educating the public about the difference these bills would make, garnering support among our community partners and legislators, and organizing testimony and other advocacy activities. MAMH also advocates for passage of numerous other bills that advance our mission by working in coalition and supporting the advocacy efforts of our partner organizations.

Expanding Access

An Act to increase investment in behavioral health care in the Commonwealth | [S.1248](#) (Sen. Friedman)

Behavioral health services have long been underfunded, leaving individuals without access to timely care. This bill creates a timeline and process for increasing investment in behavioral health expenditures in the Commonwealth, while keeping within total health care expenditures (TCHE), a measure of total health care spending.

An Act for supportive care for serious mental illness | [H.989](#) (Rep. Decker) / [S.610](#) (Sen. Cronin)

This bill requires commercial insurers to cover Coordinated Specialty Care, a recovery-oriented treatment program for people with first episode psychosis, and Program for Assertive Community Treatment (PACT), a team-based, evidenced-based program offering treatment, rehabilitation, and support services in community settings.

An Act to prohibit cost sharing for opioid antagonists | [H.1142](#) (Rep. Santiago) / [S.667](#) (Sen. Lewis)

To help prevent opioid overdoses, this bill requires MassHealth, the Group Insurance Commission (GIC), and private insurance carriers regulated by the Division of Insurance to cover opioid antagonists (naloxone) without patient cost sharing.

Promoting Well Being

An Act relative to the promotion of mental health education | [H.497](#) (Reps. Higgins and Kilcoyne) / [S.240](#) (Sen. Collins)

A significant and growing number of youth are experiencing mental health issues. This bill will require K-12 schools to provide mental health education to students.

Legal Reform

An Act relative to reforming the competency to stand trial process | [H.1460](#) (Rep. Decker)

Criminal defendants, waiting for evaluations of their competency to stand trial (CST), fill our psychiatric hospital beds and leave psychiatric patients waiting in emergency departments (EDs). This bill allows the Department of Mental Health (DMH) to move forensic patients more efficiently through the competency evaluation and restoration processes.

For more information, contact **Jennifer Honig and Jessica Larochelle**, MAMH Co-Directors of Public Policy and Government Relations: jenniferhonig@mamh.org and jessicalarochelle@mamh.org