



Policy Proposals for Your Consideration at The State House

An Act Relative to Recovery Coach Licensure

S.1388 (Senator John Keenan) has been marked up and gone to Health Care Financing Committee and H.2005

The License for Recovery Coach Committee is leading educational efforts. This bill has been passed with changes in a larger bill H4758 by the House. Senate must take action for next steps. Contact Maryanne

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- **What it does:** This sets up a recovery coach licensure process with a board with the majority made up of peer recovery coaches under Massachusetts Department of Public Health. The proposal was written with direction from recovery coaches! You can get involved.
- **Why it is important:** It promotes payer reimbursement, while ensuring those who advertise themselves as licensed recovery coaches are providing appropriate support and services.

An Act Relative to Preventing Overdose Deaths and Increasing Access to Treatment

S.1242 (Senator Julian Cyr) was reported favorably and referred to the committee on Health Care Financing and H.1981 (Representative Dylan Fernandes, Representative Marjorie Decker) was reported favorably and referred to the committee on House Ways and Means.

Massachusetts for Overdose Prevention Centers (MA4OPC) is supporting this effort. Contact: MassachusettsForOPC@gmail.com

- **What it does:** The legislation would (1) create a 10-year pilot program to allow the establishment of overdose prevention centers; (2) require local authorization and approval by the local board of health; (3) include civil and criminal protections for staff, clients, and operators; and (4) require data collection to inform public health efforts and prevent overdose deaths in the Commonwealth.
- **Why it is Important:** 6 people die of drug overdoses in Massachusetts every day. Recent DPH data shows widening racial disparities in overdose deaths. Opioid overdose deaths of Black, non-Hispanic men leaped 63% in 2021. The CDC reports that overdose death rates are now at 44% for Black people and 39% for AI/AN people. OPCs save lives, increase access to harm reduction services, and link people to treatment. These centers are evidence-based, legally sanctioned harm reduction facilities. In New York City, two OPCs have been open since December 2021; 600 overdoses have been reversed and ZERO overdose deaths have occurred.

An Act Relative to Treatment, Not Imprisonment

S.982 (Senator Cindy Friedman) and H.1391 (Representative Ruth Balser)

Contact Lisa Newman Polk at lisa@lisanewmanpolk.com

- **What it does:** This bill stops incarceration for just a relapse, now known as having an interruption in recovery, while on pretrial release or probation.
- **Why it is important:** It acknowledges that just having an interruption in recovery is not a crime, and that a referral to treatment is the more effective alternative to imprisonment.

An Act Ensuring Access to Addiction Services

H.1966 (Representative Ruth Balser) and S.1247 (Senator Cindy Friedman) were both reported favorably and referred to the committee on Health Care Financing. This bill has been edited and passed by The House in a larger bill, H4758. Senate must take action for next steps.

Prisoners' Legal Services of Massachusetts is leading educational efforts. Contact Liz Matos at lmatos@plisma.org

- **What it does:** It assures men civilly committed to addiction treatment under Section 35 be sent to a secure facility approved by The Massachusetts Department of Mental Health or Department of Public Health.
- **Why it is important:** Currently, men civilly committed to addiction treatment under Section 35 can be sent to a facility run by the Department of Corrections even though they have been charged with no crime. It is time for a man civilly committed to treatment to do so without fear of being placed in a prison.

An Act Providing Access to Full Spectrum of Addiction Treatment Services

S.662 (Senator John Keenan) was reported favorably and referred to the committee on Health Care Financing and H.1146 (Representative Adam Scanlon and Kate Donaghue) was reported favorably by committee.

The Full Spectrum Coalition is leading educational efforts. Contact Maryanne Frangules: maryanne@moar-recovery.org

- **What it does:** Expands access to further treatment by requiring public and private insurance carriers to cover up to a total of 30 days of treatment, if the treating provider deems the services are medically necessary.

- **Why it is important:** Under current law, up to 14 days is allowed. Many only have access to detoxification and clinical stabilization services. This is about the right to timely and appropriate access and duration of care paid for by our health insurance.

[An Act Relative to Substance Exposed Newborns](#)

S. 64 (Senator Joanne Comerford) and H.173 (Representative Sean Garballey) were both redrafted as H.4392, An Act Relative to Substance Exposed Newborns and reported favorably by committee and referred to the Committee on Joint Ways and Means. The House passed this bill with some edits under a larger bill, H4758. The Senate must take action for next steps.

Contact Andrea Pessolano: Andrea.Pessolano@bmc.org

- **What it does:** This move takes away 51A mandated reporting for a mother, who is taking prescribed medication for recovery. It does not take away 51A mandated reporting if there is suspected abuse or neglect. Providers would still be obligated to file a report if they suspect abuse or neglect.
- **Why it is important:** It will reduce unnecessary reporting and counterproductive family separation which is traumatic for the mother and child. It is time to eliminate the unsupported assumption that a child will face long-term harm because of prenatal substance exposure to opioids. More specifically, if the mother is following a treatment plan including medication for opioid use disorder, she is deserving of support instead of being served a 51A.

[An Act to Parole Reform Supervision in The Interest of Justice](#)

S. 1534 (Senator Patricia Jehlen) is in Joint Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security.

The ACLU is leading the educational effort. Contact Mike Ryan: mryan@aclum.org

- **What it does:** It would reduce reincarceration for technical violations of parole by eliminating standard conditions of release that perpetuate systemic racism.
- **Why it is important:** It imposes specific requirements for the parole board to follow. It prohibits the board from revoking parole and reincarcerating someone in the case of a non-criminal violation or where the violation stems from an interruption in recovery caused by a SUD. While Black and Latinx people make up 30% of the US population, they account for 51% of the jail population. According to the NIDA, 85% of the prison population has an active SUD or incarcerated for a crime involving drugs.

[An Act Relating to Threats of Suicide While in Court Custody \(Stavri's Law\)](#)

S.1102 (Senator Jacob Oliveira) and H.1476 (Representatives Tricia Farley-Bouvier and Brian Ashe) were both sent to study.

- **What it does:** It mandates the recording of any suicidal behavior while in court custody.
- **Why it is important:** Recording suicidal behavior creates historical documentation that might prevent the finality of suicide. This should lead to appropriate care vs inappropriate sentencing. A SAMHSA in Brief 2016 study reports that suicide is more likely for people with a substance use history and, in a justice setting.

[An Act Relative to Successful Transition and Re-entry to Tomorrow for Incarcerated Persons \(STARTT ACT\)](#)

H.2326 (Representative Brandy Fluker Oakley) and S.1506 (Senator Sal DiDomenico)'s

What it does: This bill requires that people in jail or prison be given ID's at least 30 days before their release and lets them list another person's address or an agency address (with permission) on the ID if they have no home address.

- **Why it is important:** Many people have no ID upon release from incarceration. ID's can be lost during an arrest or thrown away when a person fails to return to home because they cannot make bail or are sentenced. It is very difficult to get a new ID card without the old one. Lack of an ID prevents a person from applying for/obtaining employment, housing, training, benefits, etc.

If you like any of the above policy priorities outlined above, you can email, call, or visit your elected state representative or senator and ask for consideration of cosponsoring, which means adding their name as a supporter.

Who is your elected Representative and Senator?

Go to: <https://malegislature.gov/Search/FindMyLegislator>.

Put in your address information and the legislator's contact information appears.

Your Message: My name is _____, I live at _____ in your district. Please know that I would appreciate you cosponsoring_ for this reason. (Give reason – {copy a sentence from fact sheet.}) I look forward to hearing from you.”