



## Massachusetts Psychological Association

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### Testimony of the Massachusetts Psychological Association

#### In support of H. 1070 and S. 1093, An Act to further define medical necessity determinations

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The Massachusetts Psychological Association (MPA) represents over 1,700 psychologists in Massachusetts in carrying out our mission to advance psychology as a science, as a profession, and as a means of promoting human welfare. MPA strongly supports H. 1070 and S. 1093, *An Act to further define medical necessity determinations*. Placing treatment decisions where they belong, with the trained and licensed behavioral health providers, improves access to desperately needed services for the people of Massachusetts. In July 2014, the Legislature enacted Chapter 258 of the Acts of 2014 which provided that for Substance Abuse acute treatment and clinical stabilization services, medical necessity would be determined by the treating clinician in consultation with the patient. *This provision should be extended to mental health services: S1093/H1070 would accomplish that and allow for Medical Necessity Determinations to be made by the treating clinician for mental health services.*

Health plans have a long history of micro-managing delivery of services, particularly in the areas of behavioral health and substance use. This has created unnecessary barriers to accessing care, and has hampered treatments for consumers with diagnoses such as serious mental illness or personality disorders, which typically require lengthier treatments to be effective. Thanks to your work in the legislature, such barriers are no longer allowed in the treatment of substance use.

The micro-managing of delivery of services by health plans can result in restrictions to needed care since unless the Insurance carrier approves services, the patient is at full risk for any payment for treatment. Since current law allows health plans to restrict approvals and create their own narrow

definitions of medical necessity criteria, clinician's requests for authorizations for necessary treatments can often result in either no approval for any treatment; or reduced forms of treatment different from what the patient and clinician believe is necessary.

We request that you recommend H.1070/S.1093 An Act to further define medical necessity determinations favorably out of committee so that consumers will have access to the behavioral health services that are determined to be necessary by their treating clinicians.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Doherty

Executive Director, Massachusetts Psychological Association