

To: The Honorable Ron Mariano, Speaker of the House of Representatives  
The Honorable Karen Spilka, Senate President  
The Honorable Cindy Friedman, Senate Chair, Joint Committee on Health Care Financing  
The Honorable John Lawn, Jr., House Chair, Joint Committee on Health Care Financing  
The Honorable Frank Moran, Second Assistant Majority Leader  
The Honorable Hannah Kane, Ranking Minority, Joint Committee on Health Care Financing  
The Honorable John Cronin, Senate Vice Chair, Joint Committee on Health Care Financing  
The Honorable Bruce Tarr, Senate Minority Leader

From: The below 133 signatories including a breadth of MA health care stakeholders and leaders

Date: July 24, 2024

Re: Section 116 of S. 2881, An Act enhancing the health care market review process

We greatly appreciate the tireless work that both chambers have done to improve health care in Massachusetts this legislative session.

As you know, we have a Primary Care crisis with regard to access to care. Many of you have experienced firsthand or through friends and family how difficult it is to find a Primary Care clinician. This seems poised to get worse as 1/3 of the Primary Care workforce in Massachusetts is over the age of 60 (MHQP/CHIA Dashboard) and clinician burnout among PCPs continues to rise. Meanwhile, healthcare has become increasingly unaffordable and inconvenient, while quality remains stagnant and health inequities persist.

In 2021, the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine issued a report on Primary Care stating that Primary Care is the only component of health care that delivers both better health and increased health equity, with the potential to decrease the overall cost of care. In other words, increasing investment in Primary Care offers a chance to get more for less. Despite Primary Care's advantages for health, equity, and cost, we continue to invest only about 7% of MA healthcare dollars in Primary Care (about 5% nationwide), while peer countries invest 12-15% in Primary Care and achieve markedly better health outcomes in areas such as life expectancy, infant mortality, and preventable deaths.

We owe it to the residents of Massachusetts to do better.

The Senate Healthcare Bill (S. 2881, An Act enhancing the health care market review process) features Section 116, the establishment of a Primary Care Task Force (PCTF), charged with studying Primary Care access, delivery, and payment in Massachusetts. The PCTF will be asked to issue recommendations over the next year to stabilize and strengthen the Primary Care system and the Primary Care workforce. The PCTF will also be asked to define Primary Care for these purposes and increase the transparency regarding funds flow into Primary Care.

We urge you to support Section 116 of the Senate Healthcare bill (S. 2881) as a critical first step in addressing the Primary Care crisis in Massachusetts. If we ignore this crisis, Primary Care will continue to erode, and the cost of healthcare will continue to rise in the face of worsening health equity and access to care.

Thank you for your consideration,

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