



**Office of
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Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

For Immediate Release

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Representative Kane supports comprehensive children's health and wellness bill

BOSTON – Representative Hannah Kane, R-Shrewsbury recently joined with her colleagues to support a bill providing uninterrupted MassHealth coverage to foster children and children in the custody of the Department of Children and Families until they turn 26.

House Bill 4210, *An Act relative to children's health and wellness*, passed the House of Representatives on a vote of 154-0 on November 19. The bill represents a compromise negotiated by a six-member Conference Committee, which worked to resolve the differences between two earlier versions of the bill passed by the House and the Senate.

The Senate is expected to vote on the Conference Committee report on November 20, after which it will go to Governor Charlie Baker for his review and signature.

In addition to protecting MassHealth coverage for children in DCF custody, House Bill 4210 requires insurance carriers to establish electronic health care provider directories and to update them on a monthly basis so consumers can more easily access information on providers and plans. The bill also establishes a task force within the Division of Insurance to develop recommendations for ensuring the accuracy of the information contained in these directories, and requires all health insurance carriers to be in compliance by October 1, 2020.

House Bill 4210 also requires the Executive Office of Health and Human Services to work with DCF, the Massachusetts Child Advocate, the Department of Mental Health, the Department of Early Education and Care and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to develop a pilot program of three regional childhood behavioral health centers of excellence. These health centers will provide comprehensive information on behavioral health resources to families, clinicians, early education providers, and school districts.

House Bill 4210 also creates several commissions and task forces to study various children's health care issues, including:

- a commission to review existing mandated reporter laws and regulations, which will file a report containing its recommendations by July 31, 2020;

- an analysis by the Health Policy Commission, EOHHS, the Department of Public Health, and the Center for Health Information Analysis focusing on children with medically complex health issues that will look at coverage, access to services, medical resources utilized, and costs;
- a task force on pediatric behavioral health screening, which will issue its findings and recommendations by April 1, 2020;
- a legislative commission to examine ways to increase the pediatric workforce and expand access to these providers, with a reporting deadline of July 1, 2020; and
- a legislative commission to consider best practices for expanding access to school-based health centers, with a reporting deadline of July 1, 2020.

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