



# MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL COURT

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## JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Moore, Kane Vote to Pass Child Wellness Legislation**

*Legislation expands access to and supports health services for children*

BOSTON – Senator Michael O. Moore (D-Millbury) and Representative Hannah E. Kane (R-Shrewsbury) announced the passage of legislation to support the health and wellness of children across the Commonwealth.

The bill aims to break down silos of service to better address the complex health and wellness needs specific to the Commonwealth’s 1.4 million children. The effort seeks to create a foundation for better access to services and more data to inform future policy, while supporting a holistic approach to children’s health and safety.

“As a father, and as a legislator, I was proud to support this bill because the wellbeing of the children in our Commonwealth is of paramount importance,” said Senator Moore. “Providing increased access to health care and enhanced services is critical to helping our youth thrive.”

“The health of our children is a top priority of the Legislature and this bill is a critical piece of that endeavor,” said Representative Kane. “As the Ranking Minority House member on the Public Health Committee and the mother of three children, I am confident this bill will take important steps in protecting and expanding the well-being of Commonwealth children.”

Among its provisions, the legislation seeks to address child wellness in several key areas. In particular, the bill secures healthcare benefits for foster children until the age of 26, making it easier for this vulnerable population to access MassHealth benefits they are entitled to, at minimal cost to the Commonwealth. It codifies the practice for Massachusetts in the event of change on the federal level to the Affordable Care Act.

The bill also requires insurance companies to maintain accurate and accessible provider directories for health plans. The provision directs companies to make the directories available without requiring users to create a new online account or profile. Importantly, the bill also creates childhood behavioral health centers of excellence via a pilot program that designates three regional centers to act as clearinghouses to connect families, providers, and educators to services and training opportunities.

Lastly, the bill establishes several special commissions and requires the Health Policy Commission to conduct an analysis of children with medical complexities to analyze costs and population characteristics of this group in order to develop recommendations about how to serve this unique population. One of the special commissions established under the bill is tasked with reviewing and making recommendations on mandated reporting to improve responses to child abuse and neglect.

The bill now goes to Governor Charlie Baker for his consideration. To continue tracking the legislation, H.4210, visit the Legislature's website, [www.MAlegislature.gov](http://www.MAlegislature.gov).

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