

SENATE No.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Benjamin B. Downing

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the passage of the accompanying bill:

An Act relative to healthcare outreach and enrollment.

PETITION OF:

NAME:

Benjamin B. Downing

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

Berkshire, Hampshire and Franklin

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand and Nine

AN ACT RELATIVE TO HEALTHCARE OUTREACH AND ENROLLMENT.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 16 of chapter 6A of the General Laws, as amended by section 14 of chapter 176 of
2 the acts of 2008, is hereby amended by inserting after the words "(7) the health facilities appeal board"
3 the words "(8) the health care outreach and education unit".

4 SECTION 2. Chapter 6A of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after section 16S the
5 following section:-

6 Section 16T. (a) There shall be a health care outreach and education unit within the executive
7 office of health and human services. The unit shall coordinate statewide activities in marketing,
8 outreach, enrollment, coverage retention, and the dissemination of educational materials related to
9 publicly administered or publicly subsidized health care coverage for residents of the Commonwealth.
10 The unit shall collaborate with appropriate agencies, including, but not limited to, the office of medicaid,
11 the department of public health, the division of health care finance and policy, the executive office of
12 labor and workforce development, the commonwealth health insurance connector authority, the
13 executive office of administration and finance, the department of revenue, the division of insurance, the
14 office for refugees and immigrants, the executive office of elder affairs, and the recipients of enrollment

15 and outreach grants pursuant to this section to develop common strategies, best practices, and
16 guidelines for providing informational support and assistance to consumers, non-profit assistance
17 organizations, employers, and businesses.

18 (b) The secretary shall form an advisory committee made up of a broad cross-section of
19 representatives of non-governmental groups concerned with community outreach, community health
20 education and public health programs. The Committee shall consist of appointees from organizations
21 representing varied constituencies including, but not limited to, community health workers, health care
22 consumers, low-income populations, racial and ethnic minority groups, and immigrant groups. The
23 committee shall have representation from all regions of the Commonwealth. The unit shall consult with
24 the advisory committee regarding the grant design and scope (including application process, minimum
25 grant amounts); best practices; data and reporting requirements; and other issues. The unit shall
26 provide the advisory committee with information on activities submitted by grant recipients. The unit
27 shall work in consultation with the advisory committee to establish and implement an evaluation
28 process to assess the work of the unit and of the grantees. The advisory committee shall meet at least
29 four times a year; all meetings shall be open to the public.

30 (c) Subject to appropriation, the unit shall distribute grants to community and consumer-
31 focused public and private nonprofit groups for outreach, enrollment assistance and retention of
32 coverage assistance for publicly sponsored and publicly subsidized health coverage or safety net
33 programs. The grants shall be awarded to groups statewide, with emphasis in areas and populations in
34 which the division of health care finance and policy has determined a high percentage of uninsured and
35 enrolled individuals and areas in which there are limited health care providers. The grants shall support
36 efforts by the grantees to provide outreach, enrollment and re-enrollment assistance, education on
37 effective and appropriate use of health care coverage, and coverage retention activities directly to
38 consumers who may be eligible for programs including, but not limited to, MassHealth, the

39 commonwealth care health insurance program, the commonwealth choice program, prescription
40 advantage, the medical security plan, the children’s medical security plan, healthy start, and the health
41 safety net and who may require individualized support due to geography, ethnicity, race, culture,
42 linguistic capacity, age, economic status, immigration status, or disease status. In awarding the grants,
43 the unit shall provide written guidance to selected grantees with specific strategies of how to expend
44 funds in the most efficient manner to target populations and avoid duplication of activities, including
45 examples of best practices among prior year outreach grant recipients.

46 (d) The unit shall distribute grants to non-profit, community and consumer-focused groups that
47 are able to provide technical assistance for grantees identified in subsection (c). The grants shall support
48 technical assistance that includes informational updates, trainings, and the sharing of best practices for
49 grantee organizations conducting outreach, enrollment assistance, education and coverage retention
50 activities for programs including, but not limited to, MassHealth, the commonwealth care health
51 insurance program, the commonwealth choice program, prescription advantage, the medical security
52 plan, the children’s medical security plan, and the health safety net.

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