



Offered by City Councilor Annessa Essaibi-George

CITY OF BOSTON

IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND TWENTY

AN ORDINANCE RELATIVE TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INDEPENDENT MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION

WHEREAS: The City of Boston is often referred to as the medical capital of the world; and

WHEREAS: Trauma, suicide and mental illness continue to be a significant public health crisis, affecting individuals and families, regardless of age, gender, race, sexual orientation, income level, religion, or background; and

WHEREAS: All residents should have access to comprehensive and affordable mental health services; and

WHEREAS: It is the responsibility of the City to protect constituents' wellbeing and to promote the mental health of residents of all backgrounds and ages in communities throughout our City; and

WHEREAS: The City of Boston should provide and promote prevention and treatment services and programs, while also advancing the range of policies needed to take on the structural issues at the root of many mental health conditions; and

WHEREAS: It is necessary and desirable that the City of Boston establish a program for coordination and implementation of these policies; **NOW THEREFORE BE IT**

ORDAINED: Chapter V of the City of Boston Code ordinances, be amended by adding the following sections at the end thereof, to establish a Mental Health Commission.

Mental Health Commission

Section 1. Establishment of the Mental Health Commission

There shall be an interagency Mental Health Commission ("Commission").

- A. The Council shall consist of two Co-Chairs and no fewer than 12 Commission members. One or more honorary members may be selected.
- B. The two Co-Chairs and all Commission members shall be appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the mayor. The two Co-Chairs and members shall serve without compensation.

- C. All Commission members and Chairs shall have voting privileges. Honorary members may not exercise voting rights.
- D. Commission membership shall include City office, agency, or department heads or their designees from agencies including, but not limited to, the Department of Health and Human Services, Boston Public Schools, the Boston Public Health Commission, Boston Centers for Youth and Families, the Mayor's Office of Recovery Services, the Police Department, the Emergency Medical Services, and the Fire Department.
- E. A member of the Boston City Council shall be designated by the Council President and shall serve on the Commission.
- F. Representatives of 2-3 Boston-based mental health providers shall be invited to participate in the Commission.

Section 2. Duties of the Commission.

- A. The Commission shall serve as an advisory group to the Mayor on initiatives and methods to promote mental well-being, increase access to high-quality mental health care, and address structural determinants of mental health;
- B. The Commission shall advocate on behalf of mental health consumers and service providers, and support programs that remove barriers to treatment;
- C. The Commission shall provide recommendations to the Mayor and the City Council regarding legislative and/or regulatory action to improve access to services;
- D. The Commission shall provide recommendations to the Boston School Committee and the Superintendent to improve mental health services for students;
- E. The Commission shall support and work collaboratively with organizations, health care institutions, and providers in the public and private sectors to provide comprehensive mental health care; and
- F. Educate the public about mental wellness, available resources, and ways to reduce stigma.
- G. The Commission shall meet quarterly.
- H. The Commission shall submit an annual report to the Mayor and City Council on policy recommendations that will advance the mental wellbeing and increase access to comprehensive and affordable mental health services for residents of Boston.

Section 3. Effective Date.

This ordinance shall take effect upon passage.

Filed in Council: January 10, 2020