

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Senator/Representative,

I am contacting you to ask for your support on the following budget items. I believe the passage of the following three budget items are integral to the immediate needs of children with mental health issues:

**Increasing the capacity of schools to respond to students with mental health needs.**

- With 95% of children in Massachusetts enrolled in schools, schools are uniquely-positioned to reach large numbers of children. According to recent national data, 70% of children who are receiving mental health services receive these services through their schools.
- The program will be funded through the Department of Mental Health (DMH) and implemented by the DMH, Mass. Behavioral Health Partnership, and Department of Education. Consultative services will include emergency triage, prevention, early intervention and classroom-based approaches; provide teacher & staff training; and offer parent support in early identification and treatment strategies.
- Budget request: \$1million

**Ensuring that children in acute, inpatient settings and ready for discharge have access to the best placement.**

- Mental health care services are provided by multiple state agencies which can often lead to unnecessary disputes, gaps and/or duplication in services and diffused case management which put children and youth at risk.
- Funds may be used to pay for up to 30 days of interim residential, step-down or community-based services for a child. During these 30 days, EOHHS, in consultation with other relevant agencies (including the local education authority where appropriate,) and families will develop a permanent treatment plan.
- Budget request: \$2 million

**Improving access for children with serious emotional disturbances**

- In *Rosie D. v. Romney*, a federal court judge ruled that the state is violating the federal Medicaid Act by failing to provide home-based mental health services to an estimated 15,000 children with serious emotional disturbances.
- Requires the Secretary of EOHHS to appoint a Compliance Coordinator who has the authority to review, evaluate, design, and implement activities to facilitate compliance with remedial plans and court orders by EOHHS agencies and employees.
- Budget request: \$1 million

These items are important to me because:

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These budget priorities are the first steps of the Children's Mental Health Campaign to reform the children's mental health system in Massachusetts. The budget priorities work with our legislative priorities: An Act Improving and Expanding Behavioral Health Services for Children in the Commonwealth HB1872. This statewide campaign is made up of consumers, advocates, providers, academics, insurers, and parents called the Children's Mental Health Campaign.

For more information about these budget items, please contact Mindy Cohen at Health Care for All if you have any questions or want to learn how to be supportive of the campaign. She can be reached at 617-275-2939 or [mcohen@hcfama.org](mailto:mcohen@hcfama.org)

I appreciate your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_