



MASSACHUSETTS MEDICAL SOCIETY

Every physician matters, each patient counts.

May 19, 2025

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The Honorable Michael J. Rodrigues
Chair, Senate Committee on Ways & Means
State House, Room 212
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Chair Rodrigues,

The Massachusetts Medical Society (MMS) thanks you, along with the committee members and staff, for your work in crafting S.3, the Senate Ways and Means budget for Fiscal Year 2026. On behalf of our over 24,000 members, we applaud the Senate for making important investments to ensure accessible, sustainable, and high-quality health care services for all Massachusetts patients, especially as the Commonwealth confronts challenging fiscal realities.

We believe the following amendments would build upon the Senate's commitment to health care and we wish to be recorded **in support** of:

Amendment #507— Medical Peer Support (Cyr)

This amendment allocates \$250,000 in level funding to support the critical mission and services provided by Physician Health Services (PHS), as appropriated in line item 4510-0710 of the FY25 budget.

PHS, a nonprofit subsidiary of the MMS, is dedicated to promoting physician and medical student well-being, ensuring clinical effectiveness, and safeguarding patient safety. PHS provides education, prevention, assessment, referral to treatment, and monitoring services to support medical professionals. Research shows that physician health programs like PHS reduce malpractice risk, enhance patient outcomes, mitigate burnout, and improve retention—an urgent priority amid ongoing workforce shortages, especially in primary care. Currently, approximately 36,000 members of the Massachusetts medical community are eligible to access PHS's confidential, no-cost services.

Historically, PHS has relied on charitable contributions and grants to sustain its operations. However, this model has become increasingly unsustainable due to rising demand for mental health services and broader financial pressures on all institutions. As an essential component of the state's health care infrastructure, PHS requires a more reliable and stable funding source to effectively meet demand. Level funding would aid PHS in its continued operations, providing critical support to the physicians of Commonwealth.

Alternatively, we support a statutory change to establish a \$50 biannual surcharge for initial and renewal of full physician licenses, with the funds earmarked to a designated trust fund to support the administration and operation of PHS. A nominal, biannual surcharge will provide sustainable funding to ensure PHS's continued viability and leadership in supporting physician well-being without requiring additional funding from the state. Advancing the health and well-being of our medical professionals is essential to

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addressing access challenges and sustaining a strong, resilient physician workforce for the future. This is also consistent with how thirty-four other states fund their physician health programs. The Medical Society, on behalf of its 24,000 physician, resident, and medical student members, supports a surcharge funding model. Our members recognize the value of PHS as an essential resource supporting the health and well-being of all physicians and trainees in the Commonwealth to ensure a healthy and safe practice environment, and therefore support contributing to ensure the financial sustainability of PHS.

Amendment #413 — Community-based perinatal support program grants (Miranda)

This amendment supports accessible, community-based mental health support for patients experiencing Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorders, the most common complication of childbirth. This amendment builds on the Senate's commitment to ensuring that culturally responsive perinatal mental health care reach those most affected, particularly in historically marginalized communities.

Amendment #425 — Digital Health Navigators (Gomez):

This amendment establishes a commission to explore how digital navigation services can support public health and promote health equity, particularly in underserved communities in the Commonwealth. By identifying barriers to digital access and recommending targeted strategies, the commission helps to ensure all residents can benefit from emerging health technologies and resources.

Amendment #599 — Universal Adult Vaccine Program (Driscoll)

Establishing an Adult Vaccine Purchase Fund, as proposed by this amendment, would ensure consistent access to routine adult immunizations, reduce preventable illnesses and hospitalizations, and lower costs through bulk purchasing—ultimately saving the Commonwealth money and improving public health.

Lastly, the MMS would also like to be recorded **in opposition** to the following:

Amendment #553 & 588 — Provider Choice (Crighton & Driscoll)

Since 2014, the Commonwealth's universal state-supply program—supported by the Vaccine Trust Fund and Massachusetts Vaccine Purchasing Advisory Council—has ensured high immunization rates through a balanced, expert-driven approach to vaccine procurement. Mandating provider choice disregards existing statutory safeguards, introduces inefficiencies, raises costs through unnecessary vaccine variety and potential waste, and threatens a program that has made Massachusetts a national leader.

Thank you for your attention to these comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Hugh M Taylor". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Hugh M. Taylor, MD