



MASSACHUSETTS MEDICAL SOCIETY

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June 18, 2025

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Dear FY26 Budget Conferees:

On behalf of the over 24,000 physician, resident, and student members of the Massachusetts Medical Society (MMS), we extend our sincere gratitude for your leadership on the FY26 Conference Committee. We deeply appreciate your efforts to craft a final appropriations package that strengthens the health and well-being of all residents, particularly as the Commonwealth confronts challenging fiscal realities.

As you finalize the FY26 budget, we respectfully urge your support of the following provisions, which reflect and build upon the legislature's strong commitment to ensuring accessible, high-quality health care across Massachusetts:

H. 4001, Outside Section 22E – Affirming Health Care Trust Fund

This provision will create a dedicated funding stream for gender-affirming health care services, reducing barriers to care for transgender and gender-diverse individuals—populations that continue to face significant health disparities and systemic discrimination. This funding is important to support continued access to this care, which continues to be under threat from the federal government.

H.4001, Outside Sections 61-63 – ConnectorCare Pilot Extension

These sections would extend the successful ConnectorCare pilot program, which expands eligibility to individuals earning up to 500% of the federal poverty level, for an additional year. This pilot program has expanded access to affordable coverage for 51,000 people, delivering lower premiums and co-pays, no deductibles, and access to important benefits like \$0 co-pays for prescriptions for chronic diseases like diabetes and hypertension that disproportionately impact Black and Latino communities. Continuing this program is critical to ensuring access to affordable, high-quality health coverage for thousands of Massachusetts residents who might otherwise fall into coverage or affordability gaps.

H. 4001, Outside Section 66 – Interstate Telehealth Task Force

This provision convenes key stakeholders — including representatives from medical, hospital, and public health sectors — to address barriers to interstate telehealth access. By advancing strategies that improve care continuity, particularly for patients in underserved and rural areas, the task force will support the development of a more innovative, equitable, and responsive health care system.

S.2525, Line Item 4590-1503 – Perinatal Support Program Grants

860 WINTER STREET

WALTHAM, MA 02451-1411

TEL (781) 893-4610

TOLL-FREE (800) 322-2303

FAX (781) 893-9136

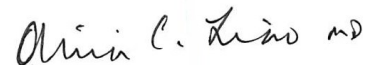
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This earmark will support grants for community-based organizations addressing mental health conditions and substance use disorders among perinatal individuals, consistent with Section 1 of Chapter 186 of the Acts of 2024. This funding is vital to expanding access to timely, culturally responsive care for individuals experiencing Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorders—the most common complication of childbirth — especially in historically marginalized and underserved communities.

Lastly, in striving for health equity and ensuring access to high-quality medical care, the MMS has longstanding organizational policies aimed at improving prescription drug affordability in the Commonwealth. To that end, we have supported related provisions to the outside sections contained in S.2525 that aim to establish upper payment limits on prescription drugs. Such policies take meaningful steps to control the unsustainable growth of drug prices. Excessive prescription costs pose a significant barrier to medication adherence and disproportionately impact vulnerable populations, further straining the health care system. These provisions align with our commitment to patient-centered, value-based care and advance the goal of ensuring that medications remain accessible to all.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Olivia C. Liao MD". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Olivia" being the most prominent part.

Olivia C. Liao. MD, FACS