The Massachusetts Medical Society (MMS) is a professional association of over 25,000 physicians, residents, and medical students across all clinical disciplines, organizations, and practice settings. The Medical Society is committed to advocating on behalf of patients, for a better health care system, and on behalf of physicians, to help them provide the best care possible. The Medical Society believes that the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is a basic human right.

It is the Medical Society’s goal that all people will achieve optimal health and wellbeing through patient engagement and improved health literacy, and equal access to timely, comprehensive, affordable, high-quality, integrated health care throughout their lives. To that end, MMS supports efforts to integrate behavioral health care to improve access. Quality mental health treatment can be difficult to access — often people engage with the primary care provider, but are unable to access appropriate behavioral health care for multiple reasons, including long wait lists or shortages of mental health providers, as well as inadequate mental health provider networks. A collaborative care model provides timely access to effective mental health care in primary care with a care team led by the primary care provider (PCP), including a behavioral health care manager and consulting psychiatrist. Patients further benefit from receiving care in collaborative care models through improved coordination between primary care and behavioral health care providers.

S.769 would improve access to behavioral health care by requiring insurers to provide reimbursement for mental health and substance abuse disorder benefits that are delivered through the psychiatric collaborative care model. While several carriers and the MassHealth program have begun reimbursing billing codes used in this model, this legislation will help facilitate comprehensive adoption of the collaborative care model by providers by requiring such coverage across all carriers. For these reasons, **MMS urges a favorable reporting of S.769, An Act Relative to Collaborative Care.**