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Statement by Lora Pellegrini, President and CEO of the Massachusetts Association of Health Plans on House Bill 2584, *An Act Addressing Barriers to Care for Mental Health*

“We applaud the House and particularly Speaker Mariano and Chairman Madaro for their collaboration and leadership in seeking to improve access to behavioral health care services and treatment.

MAHP and our member health plans are pleased to see that the legislation includes several important policy solutions to reduce emergency department boarding of patients seeking mental health and substance use disorder services, including codifying the expedited psychiatric inpatient admission process, and ensuring patients have timely access to the care they need while in crisis.

We understand the importance of focusing on prevention and screening to ensure that behavioral health needs are not overlooked. To that end, MAHP supports provisions in the bill that would extend an annual mental health wellness exam for members and the expansion of school-based behavioral health services and the focus on access for children and adolescents in the Commonwealth.

Our health plans are committed to providing high quality and comprehensive behavioral health benefits, in compliance with State and Federal Mental Health Parity Laws. We are supportive of the bill’s provisions to increase reporting to ensure compliance with existing State and Federal Mental Health Parity Laws and including provisions to ensure full system accountability for parity.”

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