

By Mr. Barrus, by request, a petition of Dr. Rodolph Harvey Turcotte that provision be made for the reorganization of the Department of Mental Health. State Administration.

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

In the Year One Thousand Nine Hundred and Sixty-Seven.

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE REORGANIZATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:*

CHAPTER 19B

1 SECTION 1. Reference is made to S889 regarding division  
2 of the state of Massachusetts into 37 areas each to be provided  
3 with an Area Mental Health Center headed by a director.  
4 Such number of areas and Area Mental Health Centers are  
5 to be established as deemed most effective for providing  
6 services to the mentally ill by the Commissioner, the number  
7 of areas and Area Centers to be about 37, each Center to  
8 provide the 5 essential services as a minimum and that the  
9 citizen board be replaced by an elected Mental Health Co-  
10 ordinator as provided in section 6.

11 (a) Each Area Mental Health Center Director to be ap-  
12 pointed by the Commissioner with responsibilities as described  
13 in S889 plus the following duty: to serve as a member of a  
14 Regional Council of Area Directors.

1 SECTION 2. The state to be divided into regions as described  
2 in S889, each region to be administered by the chairman of  
3 the Regional Council of Area Mental Health Center Directors.  
4 This chairman to be elected by the Council made up of Area  
5 Directors of that region and to serve for two year periods.  
6 The chairman of the Regional Council will be responsible  
7 to the Area Directors on one hand and directly to the Com-

8 missioner on the other. In addition, every Area Director  
9 will not only be responsible to the Regional Chairman, but  
10 also directly to the Commissioner.

11 (a) The regional citizen board will be replaced as in Sec-  
12 tion 1 the self same elected officer to be known as Regional  
13 Mental Health Coordinator, this office to be described in  
14 section six.

1 SECTION 3. There will be one Commissioner and one As-  
2 sistant Commissioner in order to make clear to all concerned  
3 including State administrators, the public, physicians in gen-  
4 eral, and patients, who the responsible official is. This is  
5 done to simplify and clarify responsibility and authority. Other  
6 staff members in the Commissioner's office are to bear titles  
7 of "State Director" of Research, or Education, or Mental Re-  
8 tardation, or Legal Medicine, as appropriate and as needed  
9 to meet the functions as described in S889, to be served by  
10 those in S889 bearing titles of Assistant Commissioners. These  
11 personnel are to be employed at the discretion of the Com-  
12 missioner as the need for these are justified by him. Every  
13 necessary personnel is to be provided to the Commissioner in  
14 number and salary as described in S889.

1 SECTION 4. A state advisory board is to be called together  
2 or disbanded as the need arises and as determined by the  
3 Governor and/or by the Commissioner.

1 SECTION 5. All programs and budget are to originate with  
2 the Area Mental Health Center Director on consultation  
3 with the Commissioner's Office and the Regional Council, and  
4 are to be submitted to the Governor and the state legislature  
5 as is usual. Since citizen boards have been abolished, responsi-  
6 bility for plans, policies and funding lies with the Area Director  
7 and the Commissioner's Office. In other words, entirely within  
8 the Department of Mental Health.

1 SECTION 6. Since citizen involvement is a recognized value  
2 and since citizen boards are not to be utilized for this purpose,

3 a new elective office is to be established, that of Regional  
4 Mental Health Coordinator.

5 (a) This official is to be elected by the voters of each region  
6 for a 2 year term, synchronous with the election of legislators  
7 at biennial elections.

8 (b) This elected official to be paid a salary similar to that  
9 of a member of the State legislature.

10 (c) The duties of this elected official are to consist of service  
11 as a mediator between the citizen, the Area Director, the  
12 Regional Council, the Commissioner, the Governor, the legisla-  
13 ture, interested citizen groups and particularly the patient  
14 and his family, with all of these above.

15 (d) The Regional Mental Health Coordinator will have no  
16 power to direct or in anyway control employees of the De-  
17 partment of Mental Health. His function shall be to facilitate  
18 communication between the citizen and those providing mental  
19 health services in order that more careful, sensitive and  
20 responsive service may be given to the mentally ill person.  
21 This elected official will provide a much keener, broader and  
22 deeper citizen involvement than could ever be provided by  
23 citizen board structure.

24 (e) The Regional Mental Health Coordinator, like the legis-  
25 lator, is to be responsible to his constituents. He will not be  
26 an appointee of the Governor. The Commissioner, on the other  
27 hand, will be as formerly, appointed by the Governor in the  
28 manner that has been customary.

1 SECTION 7. The Commissioner of Mental Health shall ex-  
2 ercise authority in a suitable manner over the Youth Service  
3 Board and all its personnel facilities, the Commission on  
4 Alcoholism and Narcotic Addiction, the Criminally Insane, and  
5 other agencies and bureaus now a part of other departments  
6 having to do with mental illness, derangement or retardation.  
7 All of these are to be coordinated in an appropriate manner,  
8 integrated by the Commissioner and the State Department of  
9 Mental Health.

1 SECTION 8. The welfare of patients now in the care of the  
2 Department of Mental Health through its constituent institu-  
3 tions, chiefly, state hospitals, and state schools, is to be given  
4 priority over the establishment of the new comprehensive  
5 Mental Health Centers. The present facilities are to be made  
6 fully adequate by taking whatever administrative steps are  
7 needed to fully staff each of these institutions with physicians,  
8 psychologists, social workers and professional staff of every  
9 kind in accord with minimum standards as set by the Ameri-  
10 can Psychiatric Association, or similar authoritative body  
11 qualified to judge what constitutes adequate staffing. This  
12 section is included to guard against the danger of depriving  
13 state hospital patients by expending funds which will further  
14 drain staff from already understaffed institutions. The new  
15 Mental Health Centers should not be established at the price  
16 of neglect of patients now in the care of state hospitals and  
17 state schools. Steps are to be taken to make professional  
18 staff positions at the existing institutions competitively as  
19 attractive as Mental Health Center positions or private prac-  
20 tice.

1 SECTION 9. The Commissioner's Office will include a Direc-  
2 tor for the care of the mentally ill by private psychiatrists,  
3 non-psychiatric physicians and other mental health personnel  
4 of all kinds. The function of this office will be to promote by  
5 every reasonable means the private care of the mentally ill,  
6 the mentally retarded, the youthful delinquent, the alcoholic  
7 and so on. This is in recognition of the fact that nationally,  
8 more patients are cared for privately than by public agencies.  
9 The rise in the standard of living, personal income and health  
10 insurance coverage and medicare and medicaid all mean that  
11 larger and larger numbers of patients can afford private  
12 psychiatric care, especially by private psychiatrists, the family  
13 doctor and general hospitals. Such promotion of private care  
14 will decrease the need for tax supported services.

15 (a) Plans to provide for payment to private mental health  
16 practitioners for care of financially deprived or indigent pa-

17 tients, such as the Georgia plan for payment of fees to private  
18 doctors and hospitals for the care of patients who would other-  
19 wise be sent to state institutions. Such plans are to be form-  
20 ulated and presented to the Commissioner and the State Ad-  
21 ministration for enactment into legislation where and when  
22 deemed wise.

1 SECTION 10. The Commissioner's office will include a Di-  
2 rectorate for Research and Development for the strong family.  
3 While programs for the positive mental health and preventive  
4 psychiatry are an integral part of the Area CCMH Center  
5 Director's responsibility, the importance of healthy family life  
6 in terms of emotional growth, character building and per-  
7 sonality development is universally recognized. The study  
8 and promotion of creative approaches to the strengthening of  
9 the individual family — the core unit of society — is here  
10 seen as the most effective means of fostering resistance to  
11 mental illness in the individual.

1 SECTION 11. The Commissioner's office will include a Direc-  
2 torate for General Medicine and Surgery. This is to ensure  
3 that at least the physical health of every patient in the care  
4 of the State of Massachusetts will, while an inpatient in any  
5 hospital or state school receive medical care and treatment  
6 at least as good as is provided in private general hospitals by  
7 private physicians. This is to be arranged by whatever suit-  
8 able method is needed, including contractual arrangements  
9 with private general hospitals, private physicians of every  
10 specialty; adequate staffing and coverage of infirmaries in state  
11 institutions by recruitment of qualified internists and general-  
12 ists; and by such creative approaches as open staff privileges  
13 in the institution, as in general hospitals, for all the physicians  
14 in the community and all the psychiatrists in the area. In  
15 the year of our Lord 1966 no patient should suffer neglect of  
16 physical health in the state institutions, large or small, of the  
17 Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

It is not only the fact that the people of the world are becoming more and more united, but also the fact that the people of the world are becoming more and more united in their opinions and feelings. This is a great step towards the realization of the ideal of world peace and unity.

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