

**CAPE COD REGIONAL GOVERNMENT
ASSEMBLY of DELEGATES
2025 Session
Resolution No. 4**

Whereas, the Pocasset Mental Health Center is the only state-operated inpatient psychiatric facility serving Cape Cod, Martha's Vineyard, and Nantucket, providing critical stabilization services for individuals in acute psychiatric crisis, and;

Whereas, the proposed closure of this facility will leave Cape Cod residents with no comparable local alternative, forcing patients to seek care at distant facilities, delaying treatment, increasing suffering, and straining emergency departments, and;

Whereas, the 50% reduction in Department of Mental Health caseworkers will drastically limit access to care coordination, crisis intervention, and long-term treatment planning, further destabilizing individuals in need, and;

Whereas, these cuts will increase burdens on law enforcement and first responders, leading to more psychiatric emergencies handled by police instead of healthcare professionals, escalating risks, and diverting resources from public safety, and;

Whereas, the lack of accessible mental health services will result in more individuals being incarcerated instead of receiving treatment, further straining jails, courts, and social services, and result in the criminalization of mental illness, and;

Whereas, Cape Cod already faces a severe shortage of mental health resources, and eliminating Pocasset and increasing the case worker burden will worsen homelessness, substance abuse, and preventable tragedies, and;

Whereas, these reductions come amid a rising mental health crisis, placing the burden on families in distress and forcing them to navigate a fragmented system alone, making these cuts particularly dangerous and irresponsible, and;

Whereas, the Commonwealth has not provided a comprehensive plan to replace these essential services, abandoning Cape Cod residents without adequate care.

Now therefore,

Be it Hereby Resolved that the Cape Cod regional government:

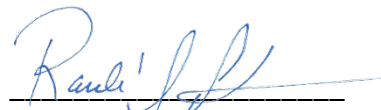
1. Strongly opposes the closure of the Pocasset Mental Health Center and the drastic cuts to Department of Mental Health caseworkers, recognizing that these decisions will

worsen the mental health crisis, increase suffering, and put lives at risk across Cape Cod and the Islands.

2. Calls upon the Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the Secretary of the Executive Office of Health and Human Services to reverse these planned cuts and instead strengthen the mental health safety net for residents in need.
3. Asserts that any significant changes to mental health services must be part of a broader plan to replace lost services and involve consultation with community stakeholders, including healthcare providers, local officials, and affected families, to ensure adequate care.
4. Directs the co-sponsors of this resolution to work in conjunction with the Speaker of the Assembly of Delegates and the Chair of the Barnstable County Board of Commissioners to draft and deliver a letter to the Governor, the Secretary of the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, and members of the Cape and Islands State Legislative Delegation, urging them to immediately reconsider these reckless and harmful reductions in mental health services.

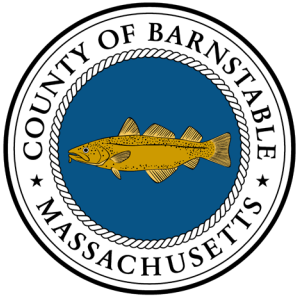
The Assembly of Delegates adopted the foregoing Resolution No. 4 of the 2025 Session at its regular meeting on February 5, 2025 by a roll call vote with delegates representing 98.93% of the population of Barnstable County voting in the affirmative, and delegates representing 1.07% of the population absent.

Adopted by the Assembly of Delegates on February 5, 2025


Randi Potash, Speaker

Approved by the Board of Regional Commissioners on February 12, 2025


Sheila Lyons, Chair
Mark Forest, Vice Chair
Ronald Bergstrom, Commissioner



CAPE COD REGIONAL GOVERNMENT

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February 5, 2025

The Honorable Maura Healey
Governor, Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Massachusetts State House
24 Beacon Street
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Kate Walsh
Secretary, Executive Office of Health and Human Services
One Ashburton Place
Boston, MA 02108

Dear Governor Healey and Secretary Walsh,

On behalf of the Barnstable County Assembly of Delegates and the Board of Regional Commissioners, we write to express our profound concern regarding the proposed closure of the Pocasset Mental Health Center (PMHC) and the significant reduction of Department of Mental Health (DMH) caseworkers statewide. This letter arises from an unprecedented outpouring of community concern and follows a unanimous resolution by the Cape Cod regional government in opposition to these cuts—which you will find attached.

The PMHC is the only state-operated inpatient psychiatric facility serving Cape Cod, Martha's Vineyard, and Nantucket. Its closure would eliminate 16 critical inpatient beds, leaving the region with only 20 inpatient beds at Cape Cod Hospital—beds that are nearly always at capacity. This reduction is alarming for a region with acute mental health needs.

Additionally, the proposed 50% reduction in DMH caseworkers—from 340 to 170 positions—will severely impact the delivery of essential mental health services. Case managers are vital for providing stability, coordinating care, and preventing service fragmentation. Their reduction will likely lead to increased emergency department visits, hospitalizations, and involvement with the criminal justice system.

These cuts will jeopardize care and shift the burden to emergency rooms and correctional facilities, where treatment is more expensive. Moreover, the human cost—including impacts on public safety, first responders, families, and the broader community—is immeasurable when mental health needs go unmet.

Our region's geographic isolation and sharp seasonal population surge—from 230,000 year-round residents to over 500,000—exacerbate our need for accessible, reliable mental health services. The loss of PMHC and the reduction in caseworkers will widen existing service gaps, leading to longer wait times and diminished access to care for our most vulnerable residents.

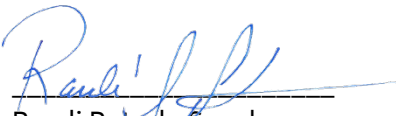
Reducing mental health services without a clear plan for replacing them is both reckless and unsustainable. Without adequate inpatient beds, case management, and crisis intervention, more individuals in crisis will be forced into emergency rooms, law enforcement custody, or the justice system—none of which are substitutes for proper psychiatric care. The Commonwealth has yet to provide an alternative strategy, leaving Cape Cod and the Islands without viable options to meet these critical needs.

We urge you to reverse these cuts and, instead of reducing services, commit to strengthening and expanding mental health resources to meet the growing needs of Cape Cod and the Islands. Any changes to the existing system must prioritize sustainable solutions that protect access to care. We also call on our state legislative delegation to take the necessary budgetary and legislative actions to prevent these reductions and ensure long-term investment in critical mental health services.

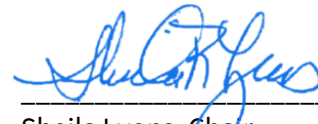
Your administration has shown that working closely with local stakeholders leads to effective and sustainable policies. We stand ready to collaborate in developing a path reinforcing our region's mental health safety net.

We appreciate your urgent attention to this matter and look forward to your leadership in ensuring Cape Cod and the Islands are not left behind.

Very Respectfully,



Randi Potash, Speaker
Assembly of Delegates



Sheila Lyons, Chair
Board of Regional Commissioners

cc:

Julian Cyr, State Senator, Cape and Islands District
Dylan Fernandes, State Senator, Plymouth and Barnstable District
Christopher Flanagan, State Representative, 1st Barnstable District
Kip Diggs, State Representative, 2nd Barnstable District
David T. Vieira, State Representative, 3rd Barnstable District
Hadley Luddy, State Representative, 4th Barnstable District
Steven Xiarhos, State Representative, 5th Barnstable District
Thomas Moakley, State Representative, Barnstable, Dukes, and Nantucket District