ABH

ASSOCIATION FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTHCARE

251 West Central Street
Suite 21
Natick, MA 01760

T 508.647.8385
F 508.647.8311
www.ABHmass.org

Vicker V. DiGravio III PRESIDENT / CEO
Daniel S. Mumbauer CHAIR

June 8, 2015

Senator Jennifer L. Flanagan, Senate Chair
Joint Committee on Mental Health & Substance Abuse
State House, Room 312D
Boston, MA 02133

Representative Elizabeth A. Malia, House Chair
Joint Committee on Mental Health & Substance Abuse
State House, Room 33
Boston, MA 02133

Re: Testimony in Support of S. 1042, An Act Relative to Responsible Stewardship by Drug Manufacturers

Dear Chair Flanagan, Chair Malia, and Honorable Committee Members:

As you know, the Association for Behavioral Healthcare (ABH) is a statewide association representing more than eighty community-based mental health and addiction treatment provider organizations. Our members are the primary providers of publicly-funded behavioral healthcare services in the Commonwealth, serving approximately 81,000 Massachusetts residents daily, 1.5 million residents annually, and employing over 46,500 people. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in favor of *S. 1042, An Relative to Responsible Stewardship by Drug Manufacturers*.

Diversion of lawfully prescribed pain medications contributes to the ongoing opiate addiction epidemic. Some people begin the road to addiction by taking medication prescribed to another individual. Pain medications can be easily taken from a medicine cabinet by someone who lives in the home, during a visit by a friend or acquaintance or during an open house for a home sale. If the individual to whom the medication was prescribed no longer has need for it, the theft may go unnoticed. Through the creation of drug manufacturer-funded drug stewardship programs to which individuals could surrender their unwanted or expired medications, this legislation will provide the Commonwealth with another tool to remove unwanted, powerful pain medications from our homes, neighborhoods and communities.

We strongly encourage you to report this bill favorably. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Vicker V. DiGravio III
President/CEO