

SENATE No. 1276

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Patricia D. Jehlen

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act ensuring safe patient access to emergency care.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	
Patricia D. Jehlen	Second Middlesex	
Theodore C. Speliotis	13th Essex	2/1/2019
Bradley H. Jones, Jr.	20th Middlesex	2/1/2019
Marjorie C. Decker	25th Middlesex	2/1/2019
Mike Connolly	26th Middlesex	2/1/2019
Mark C. Montigny	Second Bristol and Plymouth	2/7/2019
Tram T. Nguyen	18th Essex	2/11/2019
Natalie M. Higgins	4th Worcester	2/13/2019
Kay Khan	11th Middlesex	2/13/2019
Rebecca L. Rausch	Norfolk, Bristol and Middlesex	2/14/2019
Colleen M. Garry	36th Middlesex	2/26/2019
Brendan P. Crighton	Third Essex	2/21/2019
Lindsay N. Sabadosa	1st Hampshire	3/19/2019
Paul Brodeur	32nd Middlesex	4/9/2019
Michael O. Moore	Second Worcester	4/23/2019
Sal N. DiDomenico	Middlesex and Suffolk	9/25/2019

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By Ms. Jehlen, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 1276) of Patricia D. Jehlen, Theodore C. Speliotis, Bradley H. Jones, Jr., Marjorie C. Decker and other members of the General Court for legislation to ensure safe patient access to emergency care. Public Health.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-First General Court
(2019-2020)**

An Act ensuring safe patient access to emergency care.

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

1 SECTION 1. This act may be referred to as Laura’s Law, after Laura Beth Levis.

2 SECTION 2. The department of public health shall promulgate regulations to require all
3 hospitals in the Commonwealth to meet criteria appropriate to ensure safe patient access at all
4 times to a hospital emergency room or department, including but not limited to criteria related to
5 indoor and outdoor signage, indoor and outdoor lighting, best-practice way-finding, and security
6 and monitoring of all emergency department access points. Such criteria shall include minimum
7 requirements for proper security monitoring of any prominent hospital doors or entrances that are
8 locked at night through which a patient might try to egress, as well as the installation of panic
9 buttons, emergency doorbells, or active video-intercom systems and any other safety features the
10 department finds necessary to ensure patient access to an emergency room or department. The
11 criteria shall incorporate the most-current published industry standards, related to the above
12 criteria, including but not limited to the standards in the Facilities Guidelines Institute and The

13 International Association for Healthcare Security and Safety. The department shall promulgate
14 regulations not later than December 31, 2019.

15 SECTION 3. The commissioner of public health shall convene a working group to report
16 and make recommendations on emergency department oversight. The report shall include, but
17 not be limited to, an evaluation of current emergency department oversight, regulation, and
18 enforcement, the adequacy of fees to cover inspection and oversight, the deterrent effect of
19 penalties for violations of rules and regulations and cost recovery assessment for damages
20 resulting from the failure to comply with rules and regulations, and any other matters the
21 working group finds that would enhance patient access and the safety of emergency departments.
22 The working group shall report its findings, including any proposed legislation to the joint
23 committee on public health no later than July 31, 2019.