

On March 11, 2013, Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick signed Social Work Safety in the Workforce legislation. The bill, originally signed into law on February 15, 2013, as part of the FY13 Supplemental Budget, requires all direct services providers who receive funding from the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (HHS) to provide workplace violence prevention and crisis response plans.

AN ACT MAKING APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2013 TO PROVIDE FOR SUPPLEMENTING CERTAIN EXISTING APPROPRIATIONS AND FOR CERTAIN OTHER ACTIVITIES AND PROJECTS.

SECTION 30. The executive office of health and human services shall promulgate regulations within 6 months after the effective date of this act to ensure that any program that provides direct services to clients and is operated, licensed, certified or funded by a department or division of the executive office of health and human services has a workplace violence prevention and crisis response plan, updated at least annually, for social workers, human services workers, volunteers and all other employees. Each program shall provide a copy of the current plan to any employee of the program upon request. A workplace violence prevention and crisis response plan may include: (1) the establishment of a system for centrally recording all incidents of workplace violence or threats of workplace violence against social workers, human services workers, volunteers and all other employees providing direct services; (2) preparation of a written violence prevention and crisis response plan that includes measures the program intends to take to respond to an incident of workplace violence against social workers, human services workers, volunteers and all other employees providing direct services; (3) implementation of a training program to educate social workers, human services workers, volunteers and all other employees providing direct services about workplace violence and ways to reduce the risks; and (4) the development and maintenance of a violence prevention and response team or committee to monitor ongoing compliance with the violence prevention and crisis response plan and to assist social workers, human services workers, volunteers and all other employees providing direct services who may be victimized by or threatened with workplace violence. A program that does not have a training plan in place shall require its employees to enroll in the training program to be developed and offered by the executive office of health and human services.