COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
DIVISION OF INSURANCE

470 Atlantic Avenue • Boston, MA 02210-2223
(617) 521-7794• FAX (617) 521-7770
TTY /TDD(617) 521-7490

WILLIAM F. WELD
GOVERNOR

ARGEO PAUL CELLUCCI
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

LINDA RUTHARDT
COMMISSIONER

Bulletin 96-15

To: **Commercial Health Insurers, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Massachusetts (BCBSMA) and Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs)**

From: Commissioner Linda Ruthardt

Re: **New Mandated Mental Health Providers**

Date: **August 29, 1996**

The purpose of this bulletin is to inform carriers of the enactment of St. 1996, c. 293 (Chapter 293), which is entitled An Act Authorizing Licensed Mental Health Counselors to Receive Certain Insurance Payments. Section 1 of Chapter 293 amends M.G.L. c. 175 § 47B; Section 2 amends M.G.L. c. 176A § 8A; Section 3 amends M.G.L. c. 176B § 4A; and Section 4 amends M.G.L. c. 176G § 4. This mandate is effective for policies, certificates, evidences of coverage and contracts which are issued or renewed on or after November 7, 1996.

Chapter 293 mandates coverage for outpatient services provided by mental health counselors licensed under the provisions of M.G.L. c. 112 to the same extent as has been mandated for the other mental health providers listed in the above referenced statutes. Additionally, for HMOs, the coverage for this benefit is subject to the terms of a negotiated agreement between the HMO and the mental health counselor.

All policies, certificates, evidences of coverage and contracts must be amended to conform to Chapter 293. Policyholders, subscribers and members must be notified of this new benefit. In addition, HMOs and carriers who offer PPA products approved under M.G.L. c. 176I must add this new category of mental health providers to their provider networks.

Any questions regarding this bulletin should be directed to the Health Policy Unit at (617) 521-7349.