



The Campaign to **STRENGTHEN
HUMAN SERVICES**
IMPROVE CARE • RETAIN QUALITY STAFF
ENHANCE ECONOMIC IMPACT

CHAPTER 257 WATCH

Reaffirming a Commitment

Late last month, Governor Patrick strengthened his commitment to human services rate-setting reform by officially appointing 13 members to the Chapter 257 Advisory Council, six of whom are members of The Collaborative (see bottom for more on these members).

The Council is charged with helping facilitate the setting of new rates as required by Chapter 257, the landmark legislation signed into law by Governor Patrick four years ago. Once implemented, the new rate-setting system will secure a bright future for a \$2.2 billion industry that is as big as the state's telecommunications industry and arguably more important.

The Governor's latest step has afforded The Collaborative and the broader human services community a prime opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to working collaboratively with the Governor and his administration to further our mutual interest. For the sake of the entire Commonwealth, the human services industry, which includes more than 1,100 providers and serves more than a million Bay Staters, must operate effectively, efficiently and compassionately.

In that spirit, last week, provider representatives appointed to the Governor's Provider and Consumer Advisory Council sent a letter to JudyAnn Bigby, Secretary of the Executive Office of Health & Human Services, laying out a comprehensive blueprint of broad principles and specific steps to move the process forward.

Our letter is our latest attempt to help achieve the reality of fair and adequate rates by forthrightly stating the changes we envision as well as the potential pitfalls we see ahead and suggested ways around or over them. As you can see here our letter spells out for the benefit of the Secretary and her team our

Chapter 257 Watch

In this ongoing series, *The Collaborative* offers the latest developments as the state proceeds with implementing the landmark Chapter 257 law and examines what implementation will mean for the human services industry in Massachusetts.

Chapter 257 Links

[Mass. Information Site](#)

[Implementation Plan](#)

[Meetings and Events](#)

[The Bill](#)

[Executive Order No. 536](#)

What is the Collaborative?

The Collaborative is a coalition of the state's three major human service provider trade groups. They joined forces a decade ago primarily to champion rate-setting reform and ensure a bright future for the industry. Its members include [The Providers' Council](#), [The Association for Behavioral Healthcare](#)

positions on these key issues that we trust will be considered deliberately and seriously. This includes:

- Adequate Funding
- Determining Proper Cost Bases for Salaries and Benefits
- Costs of Fringe Benefits
- Staffing Costs of Training and Benefit Time (Time Off)
- Defining Components for Specific Service Codes
- Utilization Factors
- Facilities/Occupancy Costs
- Negotiated or Objective Assignments of Intensity of Need and Services
- Administrative Costs
- Phase-in Rates
- Cost Adjustments

Finding solutions to each of these issues is critical to developing a fair and transparent rate-setting system. At the top of the list, of course, is the need for increased financial support for human services programs. Without it, the entire process is threatened. The system simply cannot sustain itself if the ongoing fragile financial condition of providers and the indefensibly low salaries paid to direct care and clinical staff does not change.

That said, we will conclude this report as the letter itself concludes: "Providers realize that developing a clear, fair, reasonable rate-setting system is an important step in generating support for funding. We pledge to continue working with [the Administration] through The Collaborative and the Council to achieve the goals of full implementation of Chapter 257."

We appreciate your support in this endeavor!

**Governor Patrick appointed six members of
The Collaborative to the Chapter 257 Advisory Council**

Katherine Wilson, [Behavioral Health Network](#)

Deborah Ekstrom, [Community Healthlink](#)

Bill Taylor, [Advocates, Inc.](#)

Bill Sprague, [Bay Cove Human Services](#)

Bruce Bird, [Vinfen](#)

Bill Lyttle, [Key Program](#)