

Implementing Chapter 257

Running Toward A Brighter Tomorrow

by Joshua Komyerov

Special to The Collaborative

PART ONE

A Cool Breeze at Our Backs

An Unfulfilled Promise?

Three years ago, a landmark bill, Chapter 257, was approved by the Legislature and signed into law by Governor Patrick. Its passage represented a watershed moment for human services. It held out the promise to rescue the entire \$2.6 billion human services industry, a sector the size of the state's telecommunications industry, but one burdened with inadequate state funding.

<image002.jpg>

With Chapter 257, the devil, you might say, is in the implementation

On paper, Chapter 257 has always fulfilled that promise, putting in place a transparent, evidenced-based process where there once was an archaic, de-centralized rate-setting scheme. But as is commonly the case with sweeping legislation of this sort, there is just one tiny hitch - implementing it. The devil, you might say, is in the implementation.

Heading in the Right Direction

Just one year ago, there was reason to doubt that Chapter 257 would ever be fully implemented. Partly because of the global economic crisis and partly because the Commonwealth failed to meet its mandated benchmarks, providers rightfully doubted the state's commitment to making Chapter 257 implementation a reality.

But as we have reported in this space over the last 12 months, much has changed. Governor Patrick and his Administration have formed an advisory committee to oversee the process. The Governor and his team, with legislative approval, have helpfully extended deadlines. The Administration has agreed to align the implementation timetable with the budget cycle. And they have instituted a limited moratorium on new contracts to ensure that all new procurements are done right.

Implementing Chapter 257, Part One

In this series, *The Collaborative* examines what the passage of the landmark Chapter 257 law will mean for the human services industry in Massachusetts once it is implemented. This article is the first of three parts.

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

<image003.png>

If Chapter 257 implementation is a marathon, we're heading in the right direction

These changes were positive and necessary, and they represent even more than the sum of their parts. Today, it is

abundantly clear that the Patrick Administration if fully committed to restructuring human services rate-setting exactly as intended by Chapter 257.

In fact, if implementing Chapter 257 is like the Boston Marathon, then a year ago, we had barely left the starting gate in Hopkinton. Now, in January 2012, the finish line is still a long way off, but we are heading in the right direction with a cool breeze at our backs.

Next Stop... The Future

In this three-part series, we will examine the benefits that will ensue once a rate-setting system as explicitly laid out by Chapter 257 is fully implemented. In Part II, we will take a trip to the future to see firsthand what life for human service agencies, staff, consumers and the state would be like under Chapter 257.

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](#) and [The Association of Developmental Disabilities Providers](#)

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