



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Public Health
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August 1, 2012

Dear Colleagues,

We are pleased to announce a new undertaking at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) to encourage the integrated delivery of health care through alignment of primary care, substance abuse services and mental health care services. This effort builds upon the successes of our state's health care reform initiative and the numerous efforts to increase access to patient-centered medical homes.

With the support and input of allies and partners such as the Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers and the Association for Behavioral Health, we have formed an *Integration Initiative Committee (IIC)* to help identify and, whenever possible, overcome any potential barriers to health care integration in the licensing process. The IIC will assist any primary care, mental health or substance abuse programs or practices that intend to add one or more of these services. It will review the integration plans, customize a process that best suits each provider, and streamline the application process.

This effort was developed through collaborative work at MDPH with the Bureau of Health Care Safety and Quality, the Bureau of Substance Abuse Services, the Office of General Counsel and the Commissioner's Office. Prior to the formation of the IIC the Department analyzed and compared the separate regulations cited in 140.000 *Licensure of Clinics* and in 164.000 *Licensure of Substance Abuse Treatment Programs*. We distinguished between licensure requirements required by federal and state statute and those where there was the opportunity for flexibility and adaptation. Clearly, for example, we will not be able to waive the Federal Laws regarding confidentiality and the rights of people with disabilities. We believe that there are numerous opportunities to reduce the time and headache involved in applying for or amending a license.

In addition to the licensure process, providers will also encounter reimbursement complexities which will be beyond the purview of this effort. We will work with providers to identify these issues and to direct you towards the appropriate procedures to ensure successful integration. For more information about the Integration Initiative, please visit www.mass.gov/dph/integration.

We hope that this effort proves to be a beneficial one for those organizations that are interested in adding new services for their patients. Like you, our overall mission is the improvement of the health of the Commonwealth's residents. We are pleased to be working together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Auerbach". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

John Auerbach,
Commissioner