



ABH Committee Meetings

ABH will continue to hold check-in calls with our services committees to hear questions and feedback that you have, answer as many questions as we can and seek answers to those we cannot. These calls are for ABH members only.

If you are not a member of one of our Committees but you would like to join, ABH invites you as a member to participate.

Please review the [Committee Descriptions](#), identify which ABH Committees you would like to join, and contact Meg Socha, Member Engagement and Event Coordinator at msocha@abhmass.org.

Please note that the Children's Services CEO Leadership Committee, Senior Leadership Committee on Partnering with Underserved Populations, and ACCS Policy Committee are for CEOs and their direct reports only.

To join one of these committees, please contact us directly.

ABH COVID-19 Response

Dear ABH Members,

We hope this e-update finds you and your loved ones healthy during the COVID-19 pandemic. First and foremost, we would like to thank you for being one of the helpers. We may not be hearing about behavioral health providers in the news, but we know that you are there, day in and day out, providing services to individuals and families across the state, even in the midst of the pandemic. You are putting the common good and the needs of individuals and families served before yourselves, and for that, we consider you heroes.

Here at ABH, we are working hard to keep you and your programs informed and up-to-date on any developments at both the state and the federal level. The Association for Behavioral Healthcare is following the guidance provided by the [Department of Public Health](#) (DPH) and the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC) websites relative to COVID-19. ABH will continue to monitor CDC and DPH recommendations and will provide more guidance as appropriate.

As Massachusetts continues to react to the outbreak of the novel coronavirus, COVID-19, we are sending out daily updates and compiling resources for behavioral health providers. These resources are available via this [link](#).

Please stay informed by visiting both the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) websites. Of course, ABH is here to support you! Please do not hesitate to reach out to us if you have questions. ABH staff contact information is [here](#). ABH has moved to remote work to do our part to "flatten the curve" of the COVID-19 spread. While ABH staff are checking voicemail regularly, e-mail may be the fastest way to reach staff.

Be safe.

Sincerely,

Lydia D. Conley
President & CEO
Association for Behavioral Healthcare

ABH COVID-19 Landing Page

The Association for Behavioral Healthcare (ABH) is gathering resources to assist our members during this unprecedented time. For resources that ABH is unable to vet, e.g., provider-developed fact sheets and forms, etc., we are creating Dropboxes. You should not be required to login to Dropbox to access them. Documents that have been vetted by ABH will continue to be posted on the [ABH COVID-19 landing page](#).

ABH Dropbox Resources

While the Dropbox documents have not been vetted by ABH, they have been shared with us by other ABH members to assist colleagues. If you have any additional information you would like to share, please contact the appropriate ABH staff member.

Telehealth and HR Committee Dropbox Resources:

ABH has created Dropbox folders for telehealth resources and for the HR Committee. These resources have been shared with us by other ABH members to assist colleagues. If you have any additional information you would like to share for these folders, please contact Mandy Gilman at agilman@abhmass.org.

Telehealth Resources:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/dfd5k0lrbu3nfpX/AABjhdzBszXuvfwXxBxMAwWa?dl=0>

HR Resources:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/9sstv4qbdw5lqkv/AADgDyjKDHg0AsMhTEmOdKUna?dl=0>

CBHI Committee Dropbox Resources:

ABH has created a Dropbox folder for the CBHI Committee to share telehealth resources, family engagement tools and strategies, and family resources (ex. free meals, internet access). Please send any resources you would like to share with the group to Megan Thompson at mthompson@abhmass.org.

CBHI Resources:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/yIh0lwrvtX249be/AABZpFWqVGWtwUzDdJsNbkNLa?dl=0>

ABH PDT-PHP Committee Dropbox Resources:

ABH has created a Dropbox folder for the PDT-PHP Committee to share provider-developed resources, including example policies, tools, and forms. As a reminder, these Dropbox documents have not been vetted by ABH, rather they have been shared with us by other ABH members to assist colleagues. If you have any additional information you would like to share, please contact Stuart Figueroa at sfigueroa@abhmass.org.

PDT-PHP Resources:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/3922zvvgpljj6qb/AABo7EeylcDNuabXjRxAkrQYa?dl=0>

ABH is working to collect resources for families and staff members. Any Dropbox additions with family resources can be sent to Meg Socha (msocha@abhmass.org) or Megan Thompson (mthompson@abhmass.org). We appreciate any suggestions you may have!

MassHealth Relief

Baker Polito Administration Financial Stabilization Package

On April 7, 2020 the Baker Polito Administration announced increased financial resources for health care providers and updated COVID-19 testing initiatives. The financial package will support providers through the MassHealth program. Please see the [press release](#) for a high-level overview.

The fiscal stabilization package includes \$800 million intended to support health care providers impacted by and responding to COVID-19. Governor Baker in his press release recognizes that “[h]ealth care providers across the Commonwealth have stepped up in unprecedented ways in the past few weeks while experiencing a significant impact on their revenue and operations. This funding will support hospitals, nursing facilities, primary care providers, *behavioral health providers*, and long-term services and supports providers.”

The funding is in addition to the \$290 million in immediate cash relief and \$550 million in accelerated payments to providers announced in March. ABH members accessed **\$23 million** in immediate cash relief.

Of the \$800 million, **\$104 million is allocated to behavioral health providers**. This includes provision of **interim payments equaling 50% of the provider’s historical behavioral health revenue**. These payments will be made in April, May, June and July. The package also includes 10% increases to ATS, CSS, RRS, OTP, and CBHI services.

The financial package announced on April 7 is part of the Commonwealth’s ongoing strategy to support providers during this crisis. EOHHS will monitor and evaluate the situation and is committed to revisiting this approach as the COVID-19 pandemic and response continues.

ABH is working to gather additional details from EOHHS/MassHealth relative to the scope of services included in the behavioral health revenue calculation, payment disbursement mechanisms, etc. We will update you as additional information becomes available.

ABH sincerely appreciates the Baker-Polito Administration’s commitment to behavioral healthcare providers as essential to the Commonwealth’s COVID-19 response.

Temporary ATS/CSS, SUD Ambulatory, OTP, PACT, and CBHI 10% Rate Increases

MassHealth has published Administrative Bulletins to institute temporary 10% rate increases for ATS/CSS, SUD ambulatory services, OTP, CBHI, and PACT during the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Public Health Emergency. These rates are effective for dates of service from April 1, 2020, through July 31, 2020.

- ATS/CSS: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/administrative-bulletin-20-21-101-cmr-34600-rates-for-certain-substance-related-and-addictive-0/download>
- SUD ambulatory: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/administrative-bulletin-20-17-101-cmr-34600-rates-for-certain-substance-related-and-addictive-0/download>
- OTP: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/administrative-bulletin-20-16-101-cmr-34600-rates-for-certain-substance-related-and-addictive-0/download>
- CBHI: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/administrative-bulletin-20-15-101-cmr-35200-rates-of-payment-for-certain-childrens-behavioral-0/download>
- PACT: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/administrative-bulletin-20-14-101-cmr-43000-rates-for-program-of-assertive-community-0/download>

ABH is seeking clarification on the implementation of these rate increases and planned interim payments.

Food Pantry Information

Information about food pantries and food assistance programs is available by visiting:

<https://www.foodpantries.org/ci/ma-boston>

Or

<http://www.projectbread.org/get-help/>

National Council Updates

The National Council has posted brief summaries of provisions of Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act that creates opportunities for small businesses and non-profits to apply for certain loans and tax credits that will help relieve the financial burden of the COVID-19 pandemic. [Click for summaries](#) of the new provisions.

Additionally, the National Council recently held a Town Hall and has posted a summary of the [Questions and Answers](#).

Collaborative Update

The Collaborative (ABH, the Association for Developmental Disabilities, the Providers' Council, and the Children's League of Massachusetts) has been working very closely with EOHHS over the past few weeks to ensure a plan is in place for continued availability of critical services and fiscal viability of the agencies delivering them.

As you know from our prior communications, EOHHS will be implementing short-term fiscal relief for Purchase of Service congregate care and certain community services. The payments will equate to 10 percent of the provider's average monthly state funding for the months of November 2019 through January 2020. Please visit EOHHS' site to read [Administrative Bulletin 20-11: Add-On Rate Applicable to Certain Social Service Programs to Compensate for Costs Associated with Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) that facilitates implementation.

State agency-specific guidance is available on the ABH website.

Governor's Order on Health Care Providers

Governor Baker issued an order on April 2, 2020 designating Personal Care Attendants and "Direct Care staff serving social services programs" as health care providers for the purposes of the Families First Coronavirus Act to ensure that these "vital workers can continue to serve the vulnerable populations who rely on them and in turn help prevent" hospitalization or institutionalization. A copy of the order is [here](#).

We will continue to work together on your behalf and will keep you posted with the most up-to-date information as it becomes available.

MassHealth: Telehealth Update

MassHealth released [All Provider Bulletin 289](#) and [All Provider Bulletin 291](#) providing broad guidance for health care providers on the provision and billing of services via telehealth, including telephone and video conferencing. Members and providers have expressed concern about limited phone and internet access during the COVID-19 crisis, which could hinder access to telehealth services. Both federal and state guidance support increased free and low-cost telephone and internet services during the COVID-19 crisis, and on April 2, 2020, MassHealth released a Provider Resource to provide more information about available telephone and internet connectivity resources. The information contained below is accurate as of the date of publication.

[Telephone and Internet Guidance - Telephone and Internet Connectivity for Telehealth](#)

ABH COVID-19 Landing Page

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As Massachusetts continues to react to the outbreak of the novel coronavirus, COVID-19, we are compiling resources for behavioral health providers on our [ABH COVID-19 Landing Page](#). We hope that you will find this to be a site with a useful compilation of resources, information, and links.

The Department of Public Health (DPH) has launched a website that includes extensive information on COVID-19 and is updated on a regular basis. You can access the DPH page [here](#).

On the ABH COVID-19 Landing Page, you will also find information relative to:

- EOHHS guidance relative to residential and congregate care programs
- DPH Guidance on congregate care programs, PPE prioritization, and substance addiction service providers
- Medication Administration Program (MAP) Notices
- Department of Mental Health guidance
- MassHealth Bulletins
- Bureau of Substance Abuse Services Guidance
- Guidance relative to Opioid Treatment Programs
- Health Plan specific Guidance
- Division of Insurance Guidance
- Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Guidance
- Telemedicine and Prescribing Guidance
- Telehealth Related Websites
- Resources and information from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)
- Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) Guidance
- COVID-19 fact sheets with DPH guidance (multilingual)
- COVID-19 precaution guidance posters (multilingual)

Confidentiality of SUD Patient Records

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) that was signed into law the first week of March, 2020, made some changes to 42 CFR Part 2 (confidentiality of substance use disorder patient records). These changes do not take place for twelve months. For a summary of these changes, click [here](#). If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact Mandy Gilman at agilman@abhmass.org.