



ABH May Committee Meetings

Tuesday, May 3
ATS/CSS, 10 a.m.

Wednesday, May 4
eHealth, 10 a.m.

Monday, May 9
Billing, 10 a.m.

Friday, May 13
Corporate Compliance,
10 a.m.

Tuesday, May 17
OTP, 9:30 a.m.
ACCS, 2:30 p.m.

Wednesday, May 18
Quality & Outcomes,
10 a.m.

Thursday, May 19
RSS/TSS, 10 a.m.

Friday, May 20
Children's Services,
10 a.m.
MIDP/DUIL/SOA, 10
a.m.

Tuesday, May 24
DEI&J, 12 p.m.

Friday, May 27
CBHI, 10 a.m.

To learn more about
ABH's Committees, click
[here](#).

MassHire: First Come, First Served Employer Grant and Training Program

The Commonwealth has announced a new program called HireNow (<https://commcorp.org/hirenow/>) to provide funding to eligible Massachusetts employers who hire and retain Massachusetts residents. Funding is awarded at a flat rate of \$4,000 for each eligible newly hired employee. HireNow is administered by Commonwealth Corporation on behalf of the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development.

Background: The goal of HireNow is to address hiring challenges experienced by Massachusetts employers because of the COVID-19 pandemic. HireNow provides resources to enable Massachusetts employers to broaden their recruiting practices to include workers who do not meet traditional qualifications but can fulfill job requirements with additional training upon hire.

Equity: Employers are encouraged to rethink hiring practices, minimum qualifications, and onboarding processes to consider candidates with qualifications that may differ from traditional standards to increase staffing levels in a tight labor market.

MassHire-Provided Examples of How Funds May Be Used:

- Grant funds could subsidize additional time spent shadowing more experienced colleagues or on extended on-the-job training during an onboarding period
- Grant funds could be used to hire an external training provider to provide technical skills training
- Grant funds could be used to incentivize hiring, allowing an employer to offer a sign-on bonus to job candidates if they accept an offer and remain employed for 60 days
- Grant funds could be used to give the new hire a retention bonus following a certain number of days at the organization
- Grant funds could be used to offer tuition reimbursement benefits

Employers may be approved for up to \$400,000 for 100 eligible newly hired employees. Funds are awarded on a first-come, first-served basis for new hires made between March 23, 2022, and December 31, 2022, or until funds are exhausted.

Additional Information:

- MassHire Flyer (<https://commcorp.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/HireNow-Flyer.pdf>)
- Guidelines (<https://commcorp.org/hirenow/hire-now-guidelines/>)
- Application portal (<https://commcorp.org/hirenow/apply/>)
- FAQs (<https://commcorp.org/hirenow/faqs/>)

ABH COVID-19 Landing Page

ABH has created a COVID-19 resource page where we are collecting the guidance most relevant to ABH members:

Click [here](#).

LMHC Policy on Teletherapy for Applicant Experience and Supervision Hours

The Board of Registration of Allied Mental Health and Human Services Professions voted to extend the following policy:

"To the extent applicable for applicants of all license types, and in consideration of 2020 Mass. Acts Ch. 260, 'An Act Promoting a Resilient Health Care System that Puts Patients First,' teletherapy sessions and supervision through video conferencing or telephone that will occur from September 1, 2021 through September 30, 2022 will be accepted toward experience hours and Direct Client Contact Experience or supervision requirements. The Board reserves the right to amend this Policy after that time."

A PDF version of this policy is available here: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/mh-board-teletherapy-policy/download>.

Healthcare Provider Cybersecurity Monthly Call

Join the Massachusetts eHealth Institute (MeHI) and the MassCyberCenter on **Thursday, April 14 at 10 am** for their monthly health care provider cybersecurity call. As always, they will be joined by representatives of CISA and the Massachusetts State Police/Commonwealth Fusion Center who will provide updates on recent cyber threats and trends.

These calls will continue to occur on the second Thursday of every month and will feature a discussion leader from MeHI and the MassCyberCenter, CISA, the Commonwealth Fusion Center, and additional guest speakers to provide updates on emerging threats and cover a monthly topic of interest from the group. You can register for the call now by visiting this [Zoom registration page](#).

If you have any questions on the series please email fathy@masstech.org.

This series was developed as an outcome of the 2020 Baseline Cybersecurity of Massachusetts Healthcare Provider Survey. The Association for Behavioral Healthcare, Home Care Alliance of Massachusetts, LeadingAge Massachusetts, Massachusetts Health & Hospital Association, Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers, Massachusetts Medical Society, and Massachusetts Senior Care Association partnered with MeHI and the MassCyberCenter to develop and circulate the survey.

Hill Day at Home 2022

The National Council for Mental Wellbeing is hosting Hill Day at Home on June 8, 2022. Hill Day at Home is your opportunity to urge lawmakers to support mental health and substance use treatment initiatives. This year's Hill Day will be virtual and includes a virtual policy institute, all at no cost. For more information, click [here](#).

Peer Support in Overdose Prevention

According to the National Council for Mental Wellbeing, “Overdose deaths in the United States have increased at an alarming rate since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic with an increase of 30% in 2020 compared to 2019.” Peer support is an essential tool in overdose prevention. The National Council on Mental Wellbeing has created a toolkit for health departments and community partners: **Establishing Peer Support Services for Overdose Response**. Massachusetts has adopted many of these strategies by bringing recovery coaches into different care settings. This toolkit contains more ideas on peer support and can be accessed [here](#).

The toolkit is designed for local and state health departments and community partners who are “exploring opportunities to implement or enhance peer support services within overdose response and linkage to care initiatives” and “provides information, resources, tools, actionable steps and real-world examples informed by the latest research, subject matter experts and experiences from diverse settings across the country.”

For information on peer support for youth, click [here](#). This link contains a collection of tools and resources hosted by the Curated Library about Opioid Use for Decision-makers (CLOUD). Additional information on overdose prevention can be found [here](#).

National Council Social Justice Leadership Academy

The National Council for Mental Wellbeing is hosting a free Social Justice Leadership Academy (SJLA) Learning Series. This 12-month virtual series begins in April 2022 and will have monthly learning events. Topics will include structural and systemic inequities in mental wellbeing, structural and systemic biases, criminal justice reform, applying change management principles to advancing social justice within organizations and more. Learning events will be a mix of informational presentations, workshops and guided discussions.

For more information, click [here](#).

MassHealth Managed Care Update

MassHealth has released [Managed Care Entity Bulletin 83](#). This bulletin directs Accountable Care Partnership Plans (ACPPs), Managed Care Organizations (MCOs), and MassHealth’s behavioral health vendor (BH vendor) to operationalize a variety of things, including but not limited to the following:

Intensive Hospital Diversion for Youth: Intensive Hospital Diversion (IHD) program for youth through their network of In-Home Therapy providers as an alternative to 24-hour levels of care. Rates of payment for this program must be at least the rate specified by MassHealth for Intensive Hospital Diversion Services for Children (\$175.19 per diem). ACPPs, MCOs and the BH vendor are directed to adopt uniform performance specifications for all CBHI services, including IHD.

Behavioral Health Urgent Care Payment Updates: Also, ACPPs, MCOs and the BH vendor are directed to implement a 15% rate increase, effective February 1, 2022, for services delivered by Behavioral Health Urgent Care providers, as designated by EOHHS.

Community Crisis Stabilization (CSS) Temporary Changes: In addition, the bulletin directs ACPPs, MCOs, the BH vendor, One Care Plans, Senior Care Organizations (SCOs), and Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) Organizations to temporarily suspend con-current review for Community Crisis Stabilization (CCS) services. Updates may still be required from CCS providers every fourteen days to enable plans to support discharge planning.

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Cybersecurity

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services produces a quarterly cybersecurity newsletter with tips and information on how to prevent and defend against common cyber-attacks. According to the newsletter, “most cyber-attacks could be prevented or substantially mitigated if HIPAA covered entities business associates implemented HIPAA Security Rule requirements.” The newsletter includes information on phishing, how hackers exploit known vulnerabilities, and weak cybersecurity practices. The newsletter also includes links to a number of resources that providers may find useful. To read the newsletter in its entirety, click [here](#).

MassHealth Managed Care Entity Bulletin 82: Updates to MassHealth Peer Recovery

MassHealth has posted Managed Care Entity Bulletin 82: Updates to MassHealth Peer Recovery Coach Benefit. This bulletin outlines key updates and changes to MassHealth’s Peer Recovery Coach Services. These changes incorporate findings and recommendations of the Peer Recovery Coach Commission established by the Care Act under Section 101 of Chapter 208 of the Acts of 2018 (see M.G.L. ch. 6, § 219), as well as feedback from stakeholders received by MassHealth as part of statewide Recovery Coach Commission listening sessions and the MassHealth-specific Peer Recovery Coach stakeholder engagement process.

MassHealth will be working with the Managed Care Entities on implementation. Please direct any questions to Maddie Murphy at madelyn.murphy@mass.gov.

Interesting Reads

- [This is why it’s so hard to find mental health counseling right now.](#) *Washington Post.*
- [The children’s mental health crisis didn’t start with the pandemic.](#) *Washington Post.*
- [School mental health program eases transition from hospital to classroom.](#) *WBUR.*
- [Gov. Baker tries again to mandate greater behavioral health care spending.](#) *WBUR.*
- [Money Flows Into Addiction Tech, But Will It Curb Soaring Opioid Overdose Deaths?](#) *Kaiser Health News.*
- [Telehealth Has Played an Outsized Role Meeting Mental Health Needs During the COVID-19 Pandemic.](#) *Kaiser Family Foundation.*
- [A General Fights to Destigmatize Mental Health Issues: 'There’s a Shame if You Show Weakness.'](#) *New York Times.*