



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.

Thriving in Challenging Times: An Adaptive Leadership Seminar

The Association for Behavioral Healthcare (ABH), in partnership with the Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers, has a grant from the [Delta Center for a Thriving Safety Net](#) to increase capacity around value-based purchasing and care. The Delta Center has promoted Adaptive Leadership (AL) as a framework for organizations preparing for complex change. The AL framework, developed by management researchers at Harvard University, is taught throughout the US and across the globe. Adaptive Leadership is a practical leadership framework for strengthening the ability of both individuals and organizations to adapt, thrive and embrace sustained and meaningful change in any environment. AL is purposeful evolution in real time.

We are pleased to be able to bring a half-day introduction to AL to the membership of ABH and the League. The training will be led by [Kimberlyn Leary, PhD](#) of the Harvard School of Public Health. Dr. Leary is a psychologist, with experience in community-based clinics, and many years of experience as a trainer and teacher.

Wednesday, September 2, 2020, 9:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
Virtual Platform.

The program will begin promptly at 9:00 a.m. and will include a didactic presentation as well as small group work on a specific case presentation.

Target Audience: ABH CEOs and C-Suite Staff, League CEOs and C-Suite Staff.

[Register Here!](#)

Note: There is no fee to participate. This event is being supported by the Delta Center for a Thriving Safety Net.

After your registration request is approved, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting. If you have any trouble registering, please contact Megan Socha at msocha@abhmass.org.

Thank you from MassHealth

Acting Medicaid Director Amanda Cassel Kraft has issued a "[Thank You](#)" Letter to MassHealth Providers expressing appreciation and gratitude toward the provider community during the COVID-19 pandemic. An excerpt is below:

COVID-19 has touched every corner of our Commonwealth, and while we have seen the devastating impact of the virus on many of our communities, we have also seen health care providers rise to the occasion to provide care and comfort to patients and support critical public health efforts to keep Massachusetts residents safe.

On behalf of everyone at MassHealth, we want to extend our gratitude to you, our provider community, during this unprecedented and challenging time.

Many providers have been on the frontlines of the COVID-19 public health emergency, providing preventative care and educating patients about staying safe during the pandemic, providing direct care to individuals sick with COVID-19, continuing to ensure access to essential emergency and institutional care, and comforting patients, families and staff who are mourning every tragic loss of life. Others have seen their practice dramatically shift in response to COVID-19, whether that involved transitioning much of their care to telehealth services, finding unique ways to reach members, and temporarily deferring and delaying non-essential treatment as a necessary public health measure. We recognize that for many providers these have been an especially challenging three months, and we appreciate your continued dedication to serving MassHealth members.

State Telehealth Bills Move to Conference

The Massachusetts Senate and House of Representatives recently debated and passed separate bills that included a focus on telehealth. The bills are now in a conference committee where designees from both the House and the Senate will work to reconcile their differences.

The [Senate bill](#) included the following key provisions:

- Defines telehealth to include audio-only telephone;
- Requires rate parity between services delivered in-person and the same service delivered via telehealth through July 31, 2022; and
- Requires payers (including MassHealth, GIC, HMOs, Preferred Provider Arrangements, Accident & Sickness Policies, BC/BS) to utilize the same processes and standards for utilization review (including preauthorization), network adequacy, and cost sharing that are in use for in-person services.

The [House bill](#) included the following provisions:

- Defines a definition of telehealth that includes care delivered via audio-only telephone;
- Makes rate parity between in-person services and telehealth services permanent for behavioral health services; and
- Mandates that payers (including MassHealth, GIC, HMOs, Preferred Provider Arrangements, Accident & Sickness Policies, BC/BS) apply the same processes and standards for utilization review (including preauthorization), network adequacy, and cost sharing that are in use for in-person services.

ABH thanks our champions in the House and the Senate for their leadership in preserving the important access and equity gains afforded by telehealth. ABH will continue to follow these bills throughout the conference process and will report new information as it becomes available.

Please feel free to contact Stuart Figueroa at sfigueroa@abhmass.org with any questions.

ABH COVID-19 Landing Page

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

<https://www.abhmass.org/newsroom/announcements/guidance-on-covid-19.html>

Get Out the Vote in 2020

The 2020 Election is critical, and you have the unique opportunity to help ensure that the needs of Americans with behavioral health challenges are not left behind by engaging your clients virtually in nonpartisan voter registration and education.

Be an impetus for change in our behavioral health care system – by offering voter registration and educational opportunities to your clients.

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, voting and voter registration are undergoing unprecedented changes. This [Get-Out-the-Vote 2020 Toolkit](#) will help your organization respond to the challenges and opportunities of new technologies to create, launch and sustain a successful voter registration and voter education program.

3-Month Interim FY21 Budget Passed

On July 29, the Joint Committee on Ways and Means announced that an agreement had been reached on a 3-month interim budget for Fiscal Year 2021. This measure ([H.4905](#)) would allocate \$16.53 billion to fund the Commonwealth through October 2020.

Like previous interim budgets, these funds are authorized for the maintenance of operations and programs before final action is taken on the FY21 budget. This bill includes a provision that requires that “items funded through this act shall be funded in a manner assuming not less than the lower of the general appropriations act for fiscal year 2020 or the operating budget submitted by the governor for fiscal year 2021.”

The bill also requires that any cost savings be reported to Joint Committee on Ways and Means, and prohibits cost savings from being achieved by reducing “eligibility standards or benefit levels as compared with items funded in the general appropriations act for fiscal year 2020.”

The intent behind this 3-month budget is to gain a clearer picture of the economic impact on the Commonwealth’s revenue collections, as well as to see what federal resources might be made available to states and municipalities. This measure allows the Secretary of Administration and Finance to reduce state funding should additional federal revenue be received.

Having already been passed by the House and Senate, the bill now awaits Governor Baker’s signature. ABH will continue to monitor the FY21 budget process and will report on its progress as more information becomes available.

Telehealth

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation recently released *Expanding Access to Behavioral Health Care in Massachusetts through Telehealth: Sustaining Progress Post-Pandemic*. To access the report, click [here](#).

ABH STAFF

Lydia Conley
President/CEO
lconley@abhmass.org

Constance Peters
Vice President for
Addiction Services
cpeters@abhmass.org

Carmel Craig
Vice President for Youth and
Adult Mental Health Services
ccraig@abhmass.org

Megan Thompson
Director of Payment &
Care Delivery Innovations
mthompson@abhmass.org

Stuart Figueroa
Public Policy & Research
Specialist
sfigueroa@abhmass.org

Megan Socha
Member Engagement
and Event Coordinator
msocha@abhmass.org

Ellen Caliendo
Business Manager
508.380.9887
ecaliendo@abhmass.org

MassHealth Vendor List

MassHealth recently posted its newly updated, HIPAA-compliant approved Vendor List to the web. This list contains vendor information about approved billing intermediaries, clearinghouses, and software vendors. To access this new list and a helpful list of "Questions to ask your Vendor," please go to <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/vendor-list>.

Providers or vendors with questions about the approved vendor list process can contact MassHealth EDI (Electronic Data Interchange) at the MassHealth Customer Service Center at edi@mahealth.net or (800) 841-2900. (Press 2, 3, 1, 1 to reach EDI.) If you have any questions or need additional EDI-related support, please contact the MassHealth Customer Service Center at edi@mahealth.net or (800) 841-2900. (Press 2, 3, 1, 1 to reach EDI.)

BSAS Rate Increase

The Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) just posted the final version of 101 CMR 346.00: Rates for Certain Substance-Related and Addictive Disorders Programs for the BSAS Co-occurring Enhanced Residential Services. The Final Rate Regulation is available [here](#). The Co-Occurring Enhanced Residential rate of \$239.89 per day was increased to \$254.19, effective as of July 1, 2020.

Survey: ABH Priorities on Racial Justice and Equity

The ABH Senior Leadership Committee on Partnering with Underserved Populations has recently developed a [Survey on ABH Priorities on Racial Justice and Equity](#) in order to explore ABH members' attitudes on what priorities the Association should adopt relative to racial justice and equity. The information provided will be used to inform ABH's strategic work plan to address issues of injustice, inequality, and inequity within the behavioral healthcare system. In addition to using this data to inform our external policy agenda, we will also use your response to inform how ABH can develop and implement improved internal policies and practices that promote equity, inclusion, and justice.

Please help ABH optimize our strategic work by forwarding and widely distributing this survey throughout your agency. Please respond by Tuesday, August 11. Linked [here](#) is a PDF version of the survey for reference only. ALL survey responses should be submitted solely through the online version.

Interesting Reads:

- [Telehealth called a 'silver lining' of the COVID-19 pandemic. This time, it might stick.](#) USA Today.
- [How Those With Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder Cope With Added Angst Of COVID.](#) Kaiser Health News.
- [Blue Cross hangs out 'help wanted' sign for child psychiatrists.](#) The Boston Globe.