



Updated EOHHS and DPH COVID Guidance

EOHHS has released updated guidance, as of January 3, 2022, that replaces and supersedes all previously issued Congregate Care COVID-19 guidance.

Updated congregate care guidance can be found [here](#).

In addition, the Department of Public Health has released updated quarantine and isolation guidance for health care personnel in health care settings as of December 29, 2021.

The full updated guidance document can be found [here](#).

New Vaccine and Booster Locations

Four additional COVID-19 vaccine and booster locations were announced in Boston, Roxbury, Lynn, and Taunton. Beginning in early January, eligible residents aged 5 and older are able to receive their primary series of COVID-19 vaccinations, and residents age 16 and older are able to receive their booster shots at these locations.

Boston: Fenway Park, 4 Jersey Street, Boston, MA

Open now, the clinic has the capacity to administer 1,300 doses daily. Appointments are available now by visiting www.vaxfinder.mass.gov with walk-ins also accepted. Language translation services will be available on site.

Administering primary series for individuals 5+, as well as boosters.

Roxbury: Melnea Cass Recreation Complex, 120 MLK Jr Blvd, Boston, MA

Open now, the clinic has the capacity to administer 400 doses daily. Appointments are available now by visiting www.vaxfinder.mass.gov with walk-ins also accepted. Language translation services will be available on site.

Administering Pfizer primary series for individuals 5+, as well as Pfizer boosters.

Roxbury: Whittier Street Health Center, 1290 Tremont Street, Roxbury, MA

Open now, the clinic has the capacity to administer 500 doses daily. Appointments are available now by visiting www.vaxfinder.mass.gov with walk-ins also accepted. Language translation services will be available on site.

Administering primary series for individuals 5+, as well as boosters.

Lynn: North Shore Community College, Modular Building at 300 Broad Street, Lynn, MA

Open now, the clinic has the capacity to administer 400 doses daily. Appointments are available now by visiting www.vaxfinder.mass.gov with walk-ins also accepted. Language translation services will be available on site.

Administering primary series for individuals 5+, as well as boosters.

Taunton: Taunton COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic, 2005 Bay Street, Taunton, MA

Open now, the clinic has the capacity to administer 400 doses daily. Appointments are available now by visiting www.vaxfinder.mass.gov. Language translation services will be available on site.

Administering primary series for individuals 5+, as well as boosters.

Ask a Staffer—Abigail Kim



Periodically, the eUpdate interviews an ABH staffer so that members can learn a little bit more about them, their role at ABH and their thoughts on the behavioral health system (or the world itself). This month, we get to know Abigail Kim, ABH's Director of Public Policy & Strategic Initiatives.

What do you enjoy most about your role as Director of Public Policy & Strategic Initiatives at ABH?

Translating provider and organizational experiences into workable legislative, regulatory, and policy ideas – and then watching those recommendations move forward! It is really exciting for me to feel close to both the on-the-ground issues that our members are experiencing and solutions. I'm also really looking forward to visiting providers and their programs once we are able!

Prior to joining ABH in January 2021, you worked as the Legislative Director to Senator John Keenan. How did that role help prepare you for the work you do at ABH?

The state legislative process can be incredibly opaque, which makes it difficult for people and communities to influence change. Gaining a better understanding of that process has not only made me a stronger advocate, but made me more passionate about empowering populations that have been historically marginalized to be part of the policy-making process. I continue to be immensely grateful to have worked with Senator Keenan, due to his longstanding commitment to substance use and mental health advocacy. Working specifically in his office allowed me to build relationships with stakeholders like ABH, and bolstered my interest in the behavioral health field. I utilize all of these lessons and skills at ABH daily, from interfacing with Legislature and the Administration to chairing Committee meetings.

What would you say is/are the greatest challenge(s) facing behavioral health providers today?

Today, providers face a deluge of competing, urgent priorities that have been exacerbated by a global pandemic - there is an intense need for behavioral health services but significant barriers to providing care. However, historic under-funding in our sector has made addressing workforce and staffing challenges the core of much of the work we do. Improving recruitment and retention requires both immediate relief and long-term visioning, but I remain hopeful about the ways our sector may be resourced to meet the needs of people and communities.

Are you a winter enthusiast? If you are, what are you looking forward to about the cold weather? If you detest winter, how do you plan to endure until spring?

I am decidedly not a winter enthusiast...but I plan on breaking out my hot pot as often as necessary and hope to visit family in LA to make it until spring.

Mental Health Center Annual Reports

As a reminder, pursuant to 130 CMR 429.406, mental health centers are required to submit an annual report for MassHealth review. In September, MassHealth informed ABH that the deadline to submit an annual report was extended **until October 31, 2021**, from the initial September 30th deadline. It is our understanding that there are a number of outstanding reports. Mental health centers, and any related satellite programs, must download the MassHealth [Mental Health Center Annual Report Form](#) from the MassHealth website. Each mental health center, and any related satellite programs, must submit a separate annual report and packet of related documents. Completed Annual Report Forms and related documents must be emailed to the Office of Behavioral Health (OBH) at OBH.Mailbox@massmail.state.ma.us.

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>

MassHealth Updates

On March 21, 2022, MassHealth will update its Eligibility Verification System (EVS) and the HIPAA Health Care Eligibility Benefit Inquiry and Response (270/271) transaction to include the additional benefit plans below for applicable members:

- COVID Uninsured Coverage
- CMSP
- Limited
- HSN

Trading partners should visit the MassHealth HIPAA Companion Guides webpage listed below to evaluate the changes outlined in the MassHealth HIPAA Health Care Eligibility Benefit Inquiry and Response (270/271) [Companion Guide](#), and ensure that their systems can accept the additional benefit plan information.

Trading Partner Testing (TPT) is scheduled to be conducted from 2/14/2022 through 3/11/2022. Testing is not mandatory, however, MassHealth urges Trading Partners and vendors to test during this timeframe. If you plan to participate or have questions about TPT testing, please contact MassHealth EDI at edi@mahealth.net.

If you have any additional questions, please contact the MassHealth Customer Service Center at 1- 800-841-2900 or edi@mahealth.net. If you are an LTSS provider, please contact LTSS Provider Service Center at (844) 368-5184 or support@masshealthltss.com.

MassHealth Behavioral Health Urgent Care Program Attestation Form Now Available

The Massachusetts Behavioral Health Partnership (MBHP), MassHealth's behavioral health vendor, has published the required Attestation Form for the Behavioral Health Urgent Care Program on its website. Community Mental Health Centers that would like to participate in the program should download the form from the [website](#) and send completed forms to the mailbox indicated. The form and instructions can be found in the green "For Providers" box on the right side of the page.

As we previously shared, as part of the Baker-Polito Administration's Roadmap for Behavioral Health Reform, MassHealth is implementing key initiatives to ensure individuals are able to access mental health and addiction treatment services where and when they need them. A major component of this vision is to establish and expand timely access to robust urgent behavioral health treatment.

MassHealth recently published a [bulletin](#) outlining the process for MassHealth-enrolled Mental Health Centers (MHCs) to qualify as Behavioral Health Urgent Care providers. As detailed in the [bulletin](#), Behavioral Health Urgent Care providers must increase timely access to treatment for MassHealth members, including offering same- or next-day appointments and night and weekend hours.

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New Year, New Phone Numbers

ABH staff phone numbers have changed in order to better support members as we navigate a hybrid work approach. Our former telephone numbers will work through the end of January, but please make note of our new numbers that are currently in operation:

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NatCon22

Registration for the National Council's annual conference, NatCon22, is now open! NatCon22 will take place from April 11-13, 2022 at the Gaylord National Resort & Convention Center in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area.

By registering for NatCon22, you can also experience Hill Day 2022 and a Mental Health First Aid Summit (for instructors/trainers only). The NatCon 22 landing page is [here](#).

ABH Member Discount

Verified ABH members can access a \$50 discount registering for NatCon22 MAmember22. The code can be entered into the "discount code" box on the top of the page where the full conference registration type is selected

Interesting Reads

- [Racism and Racial Inequities in Health: A Data-Informed Primer on Health Disparities in Massachusetts](#). *Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation*.
- [Journalists Explore Health Care Disparities and Policy Pitfalls](#). *Kaiser Health News*.
- [Watch: One City's Effort to Raise Vaccination Rates Among Black Residents](#). *Kaiser Health News*.
- [State Policies Expanding Access to Behavioral Health Care in Medicaid](#). *Kaiser Family Foundation*.
- [Why Therapists Are Worried About Mental Health in America Right Now](#). *New York Times*.