



ABH February Committee Meetings

Friday, February 3
Children's CEO,
10 a.m.

Tuesday, February 7
ATS CSS, 10 a.m.

Wednesday, February 8
Outpatient, 10 a.m.
HR, 2:30 p.m.

Thursday, February 9
SOAP, 10 a.m.

Friday, February 10
Corporate Compliance, 10 a.m.

Monday, February 13
Billing, 10 a.m.

Thursday, February 16
COE RRS, 1 p.m.

Friday, February 21
OTP, 9:30 a.m.

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

Help Line is Live!

The [Massachusetts Behavioral Health Help Line \(BHHL\)](#) is live. The Help Line will connect individuals and families to the full range of treatment services for mental health and substance use offered in Massachusetts, including outpatient, urgent, and immediate crisis care. Individuals will receive for real-time support, initial clinical assessment, and connection to the right evaluation and treatment.

Call or Text 833-773-2445
Chat is available [here](#)

- Available 24/7, including holidays.
- It's free, confidential, and no health insurance is required.
- Real-time interpretation in 200+ languages
- Deaf or hard of hearing? Contact MassRelay at 711
- The BHHL can help with any mental health or substance use concern.

The Behavioral Health Help Line is a service of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, operated by the Massachusetts Behavioral Health Partnership (MBHP).

Who answers the BHHL?

The BHHL is staffed by trained clinicians and certified peer specialists to support every caller's needs. Every call, text, or chat conversation includes follow up by trained clinicians, and staff will remain on the line with you until you are connected to the help you need.

Will individuals be able to access services or treatment in their own community?

Yes. The BHHL connects people to treatment in their community, including one of the new Community Behavioral Health Centers (CBHCs) across the state. The BHHL uses a comprehensive directory of mental health and substance use treatment providers.

Can an individual call about a child or friend that they are concerned about?

Yes – individuals can call to get help for someone they care about, including children and other family members.

ABH Policy Priority in Federal Year-End Spending Bill

ABH is pleased to be reaching out with great news regarding the recently passed government funding package. The \$1.7 trillion federal spending bill includes several behavioral health policies, including language to allow Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists (LMFTs) and Licensed Mental Health Counselors (LMHCs) to bill Medicare, an ABH priority. The language is similar to that in the Mental Health Access Inclusion Act (or MHAIA), a bill that ABH members have been advocating for during National Council Hill Day for years. Thank you to all of our members who have taken the time to meet with our federal delegation to express the importance of this measure - this consistent advocacy undoubtedly contributed to this policy finally becoming law.

Other mental health and substance use policies of note in the package bill include:

- Elimination of buprenorphine waiver (prescribing still requires 8-hour training);
- Directive for the Department of Health and Human Services to conduct a review on whether to establish a safe harbor relating to the federal anti-kickback statute for evidence-based contingency management incentives and the parameters for such a safe harbor, followed by recommendations to Congress for improving access to evidence-based contingency management interventions while ensuring quality of care;
- Extension of Medicare coverage expansion for telehealth services (including a delay of in-person requirements for telemental health services) through December 31, 2024;
- Elimination of the opt-out from mental health and substance use disorder parity requirements by non-federal governmental health plans; and
- Authorization of grants to support mental health and substance use disorder parity implementation.

Health Boards Transition

The Board of Registration of Allied Mental Health and Human Services Professions has transitioned from the Division of Occupational Licensure (DOL) to the Department of Public Health (DPH) Bureau of Health Professions Licensure (BHPL), effective January 2023. This transition is part of the Acts of 2021, Chapter 39, An Act Reorganizing Certain Licensing Agencies of the Executive Department, signed into law by Governor Baker in August 2021. It will bring most health boards in the Commonwealth under DPH.

The current eLicensing platform used by licensees and applicants has been upgraded to a more user-friendly system called eLX. The eLX system will enhance the interactions licensees and applicants have with their boards, making it easier to apply for and renew licenses. This eLicensing upgrade is a part of a larger effort to bring the Board of Registration of Allied Mental Health and Human Services Professions into the high-performing licensee support structures within BHPL.

The eLX eLicensing platform is now available. Members should use eLX (<https://healthprofessionlicensing.mass.gov/>) for licensing-related matters including applications and renewals. If you have questions or issues about setting up your new account, please visit: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/health-professions-licensing-system-user-guide>.

Happy New Year!

All of us at ABH would like to wish you a Happy New Year!

We are looking forward to working with all of you in 2023, and as always, are grateful for your continued support.



NatCon 23 Registration Open - ABH Discount Code Available

Registration for the National Council for Mental Wellbeing's annual conference, NatCon23, is now open! NatCon23 will take place from May 1-3, 2023 at the Los Angeles Convention Center, Los Angeles California. NatCon23 is the largest conference in mental health and substance use treatment. This conference features three days of leadership-building, organization-boosting learning from the best minds in health care. The NatCon23 overview page is [here](#).

ABH Member Discount

Verified ABH members can access a \$50 discount registering for NatCon23: **MAmember23**.

The registration landing page is available [here](#).

Reminder: MassHealth is the Payer of Last Resort

Providers are reminded: MassHealth is the payer of last resort and providers, therefore, cannot bill MassHealth members. Please refer to 130 CMR 450.203 (A)(B) – PAYMENT IN FULL which states, in part, that no provider may solicit, charge, receive or accept any money, gift or other consideration from a member.

If you have questions, please contact the MassHealth Customer Service Center at providersupport@mahealth.net or (800) 841-2900.

LTSS providers should contact the MassHealth LTSS Provider Service Center at (844) 368-5184 or support@masshealthltss.com.

Regulation Roundup

MassHealth has finalized revisions to the [Substance Use Disorder Treatment Manual \(130 CMR 418.000\)](#). These regulations became effective January 1, 2023.

MassHealth finalized amendments to the [Mental Health Center Services manual](#) (CMHC program regulations at 130 CMR 429). The proposed amendments became effective January 1st. They include many ABH recommendations, but in some instances, add additional requirements.

MassHealth finalized amendments to the [Community Behavioral Health Center Manual](#) (CBHC program regulations at 130 CMR 448). The regulations became effective January 1, 2023.

Overviews of key changes are available on the [Regulations page](#) of the Members-Only section of the ABH website.

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MassHealth Mitigating the Cost of Housing (MATCH) Program

The [Mitigating the Cost of Housing \(MATCH\) program](#) is a new MassHealth initiative designed to provide assistance with one time housing costs (e.g., moving costs, security deposits, furnishings) for some people enrolled MassHealth who are moving into community-based housing.

To be considered eligible, you must meet all three of the criteria below:

1. Enrolled in MassHealth: You must be a MassHealth member and enrolled in one of the types of MassHealth managed care health plans listed [here](#) or receiving services through the MassHealth Frail Elder Waiver operated by the Executive Office of Elder Affairs.

2. Moving into the Community: You must be moving out of a place where you are not currently responsible for housing costs and related expenses. Click [here](#) for examples.

3. Secured Community-Based Housing: You must have already identified a community-based housing opportunity where you have to pay for housing costs and related expenses.

MATCH assistance can be requested any time up to 60 days before you move into community-based housing and up to 60 days after you have relocated to the community. In general, the MATCH program provides eligible individuals with up to \$5,500. Click [here](#) for eligible costs and expenses.

Specific health insurance agencies have been designated to submit MATCH applications for eligible MassHealth members. Use the information located [here](#) to contact your health insurance provider and see if you are eligible for MATCH assistance.

Student Loan Repayment!

Don't forget - apply for the Student Loan repayment program! Many awards are still available for clinical and patient-support staff, especially for those with bachelor's and associate's degrees. The deadline to apply is January 30, 2023. More information is available [here](#)!

Interesting Reads

- [The state's 'front door' to behavioral health care set to open as demand for services soars.](#) *The Boston Globe.*
- [Research center in Boston aims to jumpstart precision psychiatry.](#) *WBUR.*
- [Mass. officials threaten to limit emergency shelter without more funding.](#) *WBUR.*
- [Limited Appointment Availability and Cost Largest Obstacles to Women's Mental Health Care.](#) *AMJC.*