



ABH July Committee Meetings

Friday, July 9
Corporate Compliance,
10 a.m.
Children's Services, 10 a.m.

Monday, July 12
Billing, 10 a.m.

Tuesday, July 13
ACCS, 2:30 p.m.

Thursday, July 15
RSS/TSS, 10 a.m.

Friday, July 16
MIDP/DUIL/SOA, 10 a.m.

Tuesday, July 20
OTP, 9:30 a.m.

Wednesday, July 21
Quality and Outcomes,
10 a.m.

Tuesday, July 22
COE, 9:30 a.m.

Friday, July 23
CBHI, 10 a.m.

Please note that the Senior Leadership Committee on Partnering with Underserved Populations (PWUP) has changed its name to the Senior Leadership Committee on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Justice.

FY 2022 Senate Budget

On May 27, the Senate passed their version of the Fiscal Year 2022 Budget (S.2465), totaling \$47.7B. The Senate engrossed their final budget recommendations after debating the Senate Committee on Ways and Means (SWM) initial recommendations (S.3) on May 25. The Senate budget closely mirrors S.3. S.2465 relies on a consensus revenue number for FY22 of \$30.12B, a 3.5% growth over the revised FY21 projections. The budget utilizes \$1.55B from the Stabilization Fund (aka 'The Rainy Day Fund'). The budget will now go to a Conference Committee, where differences between the House and Senate budgets will be reconciled by a committee of three Senators and three Representatives.

ABH has provided a full analysis of the FY22 Senate Ways and Means budget with more details, and will be releasing another analysis after the Conference Committee reports out the final FY22 budget recommendations.

The FY22 Senate proposed budget includes the following highlights:

- The **Department of Mental Health (DMH)** is funded at \$948M. The Adult Community Services line item (5046-0000) is funded at \$507.8M, an increase of \$2.8M over the Governor's (HI) recommendations. .
- The **Bureau of Substance Addiction Services (BSAS)** is funded at \$190M. This represents an increase of \$35M over HI and includes several ABH and Massachusetts Coalition on Addiction Services (MCAS) recommendations.
- **NEW** language in the SWM budget was retained that appropriates \$6.2M for BSAS to restore programmatic services reduced due to the COVID emergency. ABH is working to determine the intent of this language. .
- The Senate maintained SWM language adding in a **NEW** line item, 4000-0053, funded at \$10 million, to establish a grant program for a program of assertive community treatment (PACT) for individuals under the age of 22. **This is an ABH recommendation.**
- The **Chapter 257 rate reserve (1599-6903)** is fully funded at \$79M, consistent with the Administration's recommendations. The inside reporting language differs from that of the House language and ABH will be working with our partners in The Collaborative on next steps.

* See page 2 for additional information

Senate Budget, continued

...continued from page 1

- The Senate retained a HI proposal (1599-0105) for a \$15M reserve fund for costs associated with delivering **MAT in county correctional facilities**.
- S.2465 also included a proposal to require the Children's Behavioral Health Advisory Council, of which ABH is already a member, to conduct an evaluation of the existing and anticipated impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on children's behavioral health and the provision of services and supports, funded at \$150,000.
- The Senate budget recapitalizes the Behavioral Health Outreach, Access & Support line item (4513-2020) with \$10M, and directs funds to:
 - \$3.5M for a pilot program to increase student access to tele behavioral health services in schools;
 - \$500,000 for a mental health workforce pipeline program;
 - \$1M for a public awareness campaign to promote the awareness and use of available BH services; and
 - \$5M for a loan forgiveness program for mental health professionals. \$3M of these funds must be focused on the recruitment and retention of child and adolescent psychiatrists in community mental health and community health centers. Individuals chosen for the forgiveness program are eligible for up to \$300,000 per individual, must commit to 5 years in a community mental health or health setting and see a caseload of at least 25 percent of patients enrolled in Medicaid. **This is an ABH priority.**

DSRIP Student Loan Repayment

The Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers (the MassLeague), on behalf of the MassHealth Delivery System Reform Incentive Payment (DSRIP) Statewide Investments (SWIs) Program, has released a Request for Proposals for the fourth cycles of the **Student Loan Repayment Program** and the **Primary Care/Behavioral Health Special Projects Program**.

The **Student Loan Repayment Program** aims to increase the number of providers practicing in community health centers and community-based behavioral health provider organizations by offering up to \$50,000 in student loan repayment for primary care and behavioral health providers who commit to four years of practice in an eligible community-based setting. *Please note that this will be the last opportunity to apply for student loan repayment under the MassHealth DSRIP Statewide Investments Program.* This final application cycle includes 50 slots dedicated to Masters-prepared unlicensed behavioral health providers in community-based behavioral health provider organizations who intend to become licensed within the next year.

For more information about the Student Loan Repayment Program and application materials, please visit the following link: <https://www.massleague.org/Programs/DSRIPStatewideInvestments/StudentLRP.php>.

The **Primary Care/Behavioral Health Special Projects Program** aims to engage and retain primary care and behavioral health providers in community-based settings while also supporting innovative on-the-ground projects that advance the ability of community-based provider organizations to success in an accountable care environment. To that end, the program makes available up to \$40,000 to support provider-led projects in eligible organizations.

For more information about the Primary Care/Behavioral Health Special Projects Program and application materials, please visit the following link:

<https://www.massleague.org/Programs/DSRIPStatewideInvestments/PCBHSpecialPjts.php>.

Applications for both programs are due on June 7, 2021 by 5:00pm EST.

Pre-recorded informational webinars for both programs are available via the MassLeague website.

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>

Ask a Staffer: Megan Thompson

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 interviewed Megan Thompson, ABH's Senior Director of Payment and Care Delivery Innovations.



What do you enjoy most about your role as Senior Director of Payment and Care Delivery Innovations at ABH?

I enjoy the constant opportunities to learn from our members, my ABH colleagues, partners, and federal counterparts as we advocate for new ways of delivering behavioral health services that truly put high quality outcomes for the person/family-served at the forefront. I am always learning, which keeps me on my toes!

Prior to joining ABH in 2017, you worked as the Communications Manager at the Massachusetts Nonprofit Network. How did that role help prepare you for the work you do at ABH?

A key part of my job at ABH is to relentlessly advocate for our members on a number of issues (paying appropriate, competitive salaries that reflect staff experience and expertise, stabilizing and enhancing the community-based system, etc.) among a variety of stakeholders. I believe my former roles in public relations and strategic communications prepared me to know my audience and tailor our messages in order to advocate respectfully and effectively no matter the setting.

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

As we emerge from the pandemic and face a surge in behavioral health needs and workforce shortage, it is more critical than ever that behavioral health providers have the support, flexibility, and investment from the state agencies, MassHealth, and other payers to meet this unprecedented need head on. It is critical that behavioral health providers receive rates that truly reflect the value of behavioral health services, allow for the expansion of data analytics and population health strategies, enable flexibility to achieve person-centered treatment, and that resource providers to offer their staff stable, appropriate and family-sustaining salaries with the potential to grow their careers in the community-based system.

Now that the world is starting to open back up, what are you most looking forward to doing this summer?

I am planning to spend as much time away from my house and outside as possible! I am most looking forward to rediscovering the world with my husband Christopher and two sons Isaac (3) and Elliott (6 months). I also have two years' worth of weddings happening at the end of summer and look forward to reconnecting with friends and family on the dance floor.

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Massachusetts COVID-19 Vaccine Program

The Commonwealth has updated its suite of COVID-19 vaccine educational and outreach materials. Please find [here](#) the communication from the Massachusetts COVID-19 Vaccine Program. This edition includes CDC fact sheets about Johnson & Johnson (J&J).

COVID State of Emergency Ending

Governor Charlie Baker intends to end the State of Emergency June 15, 2021 for Massachusetts. Please be aware of the termination of the State of Emergency and its impact on your organization with respect to the following:

[All Provider Bulletin 314: Updated MassHealth Telehealth Policy](#) - extended "90 days beyond the final date of the Massachusetts Public Health Emergency"

[DOI Bulletin 2021-04: Managed Care Practices and Continued Access to Telehealth Services](#) - "until at least 90 days after the termination of the state of emergency"

[MassHealth Community Partner Information: Updates Related to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#) - "This guidance shall remain effective for the duration of the state of emergency"

ABH will continue to update our members with clarifications and guidance related to the lifting of restrictions and the termination of the State of Emergency as they are released.

ABH Member Telehealth Services

We were proud of the swift action ABH members took to switch to telehealth amidst the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure those who need behavioral healthcare in Massachusetts are able to access it safely and quickly.

See our round-up of ABH member telehealth offerings [here](#).

Interesting Reads

- [How Medical Jargon Can Make COVID Health Disparities Even Worse](#). *WBUR CommonHealth*
- [No Vacancy: How A Shortage Of Mental Health Beds Keeps Kids Trapped Inside ERs](#). *WBUR CommonHealth*
- [Mass. Hit New Overdose Peak In 2020](#). *WBUR CommonHealth*
- [No-Cancel Culture: How Telehealth Is Making It Easier to Keep That Therapy Session](#). *Kaiser Health News*.
- [Mental Health Services Wane as Insurers Appear to Skirt Parity Rules During Pandemic](#). *Kasier Health News*