

**The Ellen Story Commission on Postpartum Depression (PPD)**  
**Wednesday, May 2, 2018 5:30-7:30 PM**  
**Massachusetts State House Room 222**

**Minutes**

**Commissioners present:** Representative James O’Day (chair); Senator Joan Lovely (chair); Rebecca Butler; Jamie Belsito; Mary Elizabeth Gamache; Margaret Hannah; Dr. Jayne Singer; Dr. Julie Johnston; Dr. Monica Le; Dr. Gordon Harper

**Commissioners absent:** Dr. Barrie Baker; Kristin Alexander; Karen Crowley; Karin Downs; Jessie Colbert; Peggy Kaufman; Rep. Kimberly Ferguson; Liz Friedman; Dr. Janice Goodman; Elizabeth Fluet; Kerry LaBounty; Dr. Joshua Sparrow; Dr. Tiffany Moore Simas; Sen. Richard Ross; Dr. Alison Schonwald; Eileen Terlaga; Divya Kumar; Commissioner Thomas Weber; Dr. Michael Yogman; Timoria McQueen Saba; Rep. Carole Fiola; Dr. Lee Cohen

**Commission staff present:** Cate McAnulty, aide to Representative O’Day; Johanna Wakelin, aide to Senator Lovely; Maureen Whitman, intern to Senator Lovely

Members of the public and other state employees were also present.

**1. Welcome; approval of minutes**

Representative O’Day welcomed Commission members and guests. The Commission approved the minutes from the March 28th, 2018 meeting. The Representative announced that his budget amendment to allocate \$200,000 for the PPD Pilot Programs was adopted into the House budget. Senator Lovely welcomed Commissioners and guests.

**2. Presentation on MassHealth PPD Screening Data: Dr. Monica Le**

1. Margaret Hannah publicly recognized and thanked the immense work by Dr. Monica Le throughout the course of this project; commissioners applauded.
2. Monica Le shared MassHealth screening data showing an increase in PPD screening since payment was implemented in 2016. The number of screens nearly doubled in maternal care settings and increased six-fold in pediatric settings. She noted that there are some providers who still do not use a modifier and they are investigating ways to incentivize its use. She also noted they are looking into pediatric access points for provider training to increase utilization. The presentation has not been cleared for dissemination and so will not be available to Commissioners at this time.

**3. Update on Maternal Mortality and Substance Use Bulletin: Beth Buxton**

1. Beth Buxton shared an update on the work that went into creating the MA Maternal Mortality and Substance Use Bulletin. The data indicates an increase in maternal mortality, many with mental health and substance use disorders. 90% of maternal deaths with a mental health diagnosis were diagnosed pre-birth. 1 in 5 maternal deaths were related to SUD. Furthermore, maternal deaths 42-365 days after delivery were overwhelmingly related to SUD. She also noted three areas in which they are seeking to increase data access in the future:
  - a. DPH is in the process of adopting the CDC data system MMRIA, which can share data across states and access medical records, police reports, etc.

- b. Beth and Monica have been working together to negotiate access to MassHealth data as well as data from the office of the Chief Medical Examiner. They are also in the process of pursuing CHIA data.
  - c. An additional limitation is access to outpatient prenatal care records. Without these, it is difficult to ask whether or not this death was preventable. DPH does not have access to facilities they do not license, so they primarily have access to Hospitals and some clinics.
2. Beth additionally noted that Massachusetts maternal mortality numbers are too low to report on racial inequities in mortality, so they are looking into maternal morbidity as a way to investigate racial inequities.

#### **4. Update from Working Groups**

1. **Public Awareness:** Maureen Whitman shared an update on the grant application she completed as part of her studies, which has been shared with PSI of Massachusetts. The grant would use funding to update the PSI of Massachusetts website, run the PSI warmline, create a resource and referral guide of existing groups, programs, and resources, and identify underserved health centers/providers for PSI to offer in-person training and resource sharing. The grant would PSI of MA now has the ability to choose whether or not to submit said application.
- a. Cate shared draft language developed by House Counsel that would create a permanent PPD Commission with express power to fundraise money from grants, federal funding, and other sources so that the Commission would have the capacity to fund an Awareness campaign, the Awareness Day, the website, the PPD Pilot programs, or other future projects. The legislation would not change the role of Commissioners or makeup of the Commission whatsoever
  - b. Margaret Hannah commented that it is important to consider ways the Commission can break out of its silo and partner with other Commissions to accomplish broader goals. The Promote Prevent Commission, for example, has many shared goals in prevention and legislation to create a permanent commission should consider ways we can pool resources.
  - c. Cate will bring the above concerns to House Counsel to inquire whether there is language we could incorporate that would allow us to work and share resources with other Commissions.
  - d. Representative O'Day will be filing the legislation after a period of feedback and comments from Commissioners.
2. **Mothers with SUD:** Dr. Nancy Byatt, Dr. Leena Mittal, and Dr. John Straus shared an update on the MCPAP for Moms SUD expansion budget amendment. The house amendment filed by Representative O'Day was not adopted into the House budget. MCPAP for Moms is currently advocating for its inclusion in the Senate Ways and Means budget or as an amendment to the Senate budget and will continue their advocacy to Senators in the coming weeks.
3. **Legislative Advocacy:** This work group held a conference call one week prior to prepare 4 legislative priorities for the upcoming Perinatal Mental Health Awareness Day. One-page overviews of each priority will be prepared for the legislative visits occurring May 9<sup>th</sup>. The priorities identified are as follows:
- a. MCPAP for Moms SUD Expansion budget amendment
  - b. PPD Pilot Program funding budget amendment

- c. H1156 An Act relative to Postpartum Depression Screening
- d. H2172 & S1048 An Act Establishing a Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program

**5. Preparation for Perinatal Mental Health Awareness Day:** Cate delivered an overview of the agenda and speaking program for the event. Jamie gave an update on the work she is doing organizing the legislator advocacy meetings.

**6. Other announcements**

- The next PPD Commission meeting will be in September, date tba.
- Commissioner Timoria McQueen Saba was featured in the article “Black Moms Are More Likely to Suffer from Postpartum Mental Health Problems—But Getting Help is Almost Impossible” in Working Mother, which is currently available online. She will be featured on the cover of the magazine when it is published as well. Commissioners were urged to share on social media.
- Commissioner Timoria McQueen Saba will be the keynote at March for Moms in Washington, DC on May 6<sup>th</sup>. She will also be speaking at the PIPH Conference on May 8<sup>th</sup>.
- Jamie Belsito shared the work she is doing for Moms Lobby Day next week in Washington DC
- Dr. Jayne Singer will be a panelist at a MassAIMH panel on Meeting the Needs of Children in the Opioid Epidemic May 3<sup>rd</sup> at UMass Medical School.

**6. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned.