

Massachusetts Special Legislative Commission on Postpartum Depression (PPD)
Wednesday, October 3, 5:30 PM
Auditorium A, Autumn Street Building, Children's Hospital Boston

Minutes

Commissioners present: Representative Ellen Story (Chair); Karen Crowley; Karin Downs; Elizabeth Fluet; Mary Elizabeth Gamache; Dr. Janice Goodman; Dr. Gordon Harper; Peggy Kaufman; Kerry LaBounty; Dr. Monica Le; Dr. Claire Levesque; Mary McKendry; Neal Michaels; Dr. Alison Schonwald; Eileen Terlaga; Lisa Waxman.

Commissioners absent: Sen. Thomas McGee (Chair); Dr. Lee Cohen; Rep. Kimberly Ferguson; Sen. Jennifer Flanagan; Liz Friedman; Dr. Julie Johnston; Commissioner Sherri Killins; Sen. Richard Moore; Dr. Tiffany Moore Simas; Rep. James O'Day; Rep. Denise Provost; Sen. Richard Ross; Rep. Tom Sannicandro; Nancy Schwartz; Dr. Jayne Singer; Dr. Joshua Sparrow; Dr. Michael Yogman.

Subcommittee members present: Beth Buxton; Margaret Hannah; Chris Just; Dr. Ruth Paris.

Speakers present: Marylouise Demick.

Staff members present: Jessie Colbert, aide to Rep. Story; Hannah Oakley, intern to Rep. Story; Caitlin Sullivan, intern to Rep. Story.

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

1. Welcome; Approval of Minutes

Rep. Ellen Story welcomed Commission members and other attendees. Those in attendance re-introduced themselves to the group. Commissioners approved the minutes from the June meeting.

2. Proposal for Comprehensive Service Map/Resource and Referral Guide

Rep. Story reminded members that at the last meeting the Commission decided it was not ready to pursue potential projects (such as a pilot program), and would like staff to pull together a statewide map of PPD services (screening, clinicians, support groups) to help them decide what next step(s) made sense.

Commission staff had begun to gather this information and found that creating a comprehensive map like this would be a significant project. It might make sense, Rep. Story felt, for the mapping project to be the Commission's first initiative, and for the information to be prepared in a way that could also serve as a resource and referral guide. Commission members supported this proposal.

3. Report from the Department of Public Health (DPH)

Beth Buxton from DPH reported that she has succeeded in instituting a uniform code that health plans, family doctors, OB/GYNs, and midwives can use to report PPD screening. This will provide very helpful information about screening incidence (provider type; number of women eligible for screening vs. number actually screened) that can eventually be integrated into the All-Payer Claims Database.

4. Other Reports and Announcements

- Rep. Story and other Commissioners offered special thanks to intern Caitlin Sullivan, a Boston University Master's in Public Health (BU MPH) student who stayed well beyond her internship to help with various Commission projects, and soon begins a new job at the Division of Health Care Finance and Policy. Rep. Story welcomed Hannah Oakley as the new PPD Commission intern. Hannah is also a recent BU MPH graduate, who has interned at DPH and the Mass. Alliance on Teen Pregnancy, and is a postpartum doula.
- Commissioner Michael Yogman reported (through Jessie Colbert) that the state seems to be becoming more amenable to substituting a maternal mental health screen for one of the pre-6-month baby behavioral health screens under the Children's Behavioral Health Initiative (CBHI). He also wanted members to be aware of a recent draft report from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality on PPD screening. He was concerned that the report was discouraging of screening, but really points to the dearth of good data on the topic, and has made comments to the Agency to that effect, along with other members of the Mass. Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics.
- Commissioner Lisa Waxman told other members about a compelling play on PPD recently shown at the Annie Theater in Gloucester, "You Are My Sunshine."
- Commissioner Peggy Kaufman reported that her agency, Jewish Family and Children's Service, had recently received funding to do mother-baby treatment in methadone treatment centers in the state, as well as with other substance-affected infants and mothers, and with families with babies in the NICU.
- Peggy and Subcommittee member Margaret Hannah announced that they recently offered a presentation on PPD for staff members offering services for Department of Early Education and Care-age children.
- Marylouise Demick, an invited guest to the Commission meeting, offered a brief presentation about the PPD project she is now beginning at Brigham and Women's Hospital, focusing on better quantifying the incidence of depression among hospitalized pregnant women, and working with nurses to improve PPD screening.
- Commissioner Janice Goodman announced that she is beginning a Cognitive Behavioral Therapy group for pregnant women experiencing anxiety. This is a research project and participation is free.

5. Review of Next Steps; Adjournment of Full Commission Meeting

Rep. Story encouraged members to stay and participate in the mapping project working group meeting, to begin immediately following the full Commission meeting. The meeting was adjourned.

Addendum: Mapping Working Group Meeting

After the full Commission meeting, some Commissioners, subcommittee members, Commission staff, and other participants stayed to discuss the mapping project. Participants discussed several important questions relative to the project, including:

- How do we vet which clinicians/support group are on the list?
- How specifically should clinicians/support groups be focused on PPD (vs. new mom issues generally, or depression generally)?
- If we are not familiar with all of the providers, should we use some sort of disclaimer?
- How should we collect the data – a survey, and of whom?
- How should the list be publicized? Updated/maintained?

Commissioners and other participants decided that the list should include three groups: prescribers, talk therapists, and support groups. All should be specific to PPD/anxiety. For the time being, our goal should not be to create a resource and referral guide, but just to get a “lay of the land” in terms of PPD services. The group decided that Commission staff should begin to collect information on services for the map by surveying Commission members (rather than a larger survey), and take it from there. Staff members said they would undertake this project, and the meeting was adjourned.