

**Massachusetts Special Legislative Commission on Postpartum Depression (PPD)**  
**Wednesday, September 18, 2013, 5:30-7:30 PM**  
**House Members' Lounge, State House, Boston**

**Minutes**

**Commissioners present:** Representative Ellen Story (Chair); Dr. Lee Cohen; Jessica Coolidge; Gail DeRiggi (On behalf of Commissioner Tom Weber); Karin Downs; Elizabeth Fluet; Liz Friedman; Mary Elizabeth Gamache; Dr. Gordon Harper; Dr. Julie Johnston; Peggy Kaufman; Kerry LaBounty; Dr. Monica Le; Dr. Claire Levesque; Dr. Tiffany Moore Simas; Rep. Tom Sannicandro; Lisa Waxman.

**Commissioners absent:** Sen. Thomas McGee (Chair); Karen Crowley; Rep. Kimberly Ferguson; Sen. Jennifer Flanagan; Dr. Janice Goodman; Sen. Richard Moore; Rep. James O'Day; Rep. Denise Provost; Sen. Richard Ross; Dr. Alison Schonwald; Nancy Schwartz; Dr. Jayne Singer; Dr. Joshua Sparrow; Eileen Terlaga; Commissioner Thomas Weber; Dr. Michael Yogman.

**Subcommittee members present:** Beth Buxton; Dr. Claudia Gold; Margaret Hannah.

**Special guests present:** Dr. John Straus, Director of Special Projects, Mass. Behavioral Health Partnership; Rossana Valencia, Project Manager, MassHealth.

**Staff members present:** Jessie Colbert, aide to Rep. Story; Taylor Parnham, 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 participants. The Commission approved the minutes from the May meeting.

**2. Update and discussion of Commission's role in new projects**

Mass. Child Psychiatry Access Project (MCPAP) PPD expansion: Dr. John Straus updated the Commission on MCPAP's expansion to address PPD in the pediatric setting, which was successfully funded in the state budget. The MCPAP expansion, called MCPAP for Moms will offer real-time psychiatric consultation and care coordination for providers serving pregnant/postpartum women including obstetricians, pediatricians, adult primary care physicians, and psychiatrists. This will add to MCPAP's existing work providing children's behavioral health consultation. Other related supports for doctors and moms are also being developed as part of the project.

Dr. Straus shared that the next steps in this project will be: hiring a project director; developing a screening toolkit (including a protocol for routing moms through their own providers for further help when needed); putting together the perinatal consultation team; working with MotherWoman on community coalitions and support groups to further assist moms; and developing an evaluation plan. Dr. Lee Cohen, Peggy Kaufman, Dr. Claudia Gold and other members and attendees asked questions and offered support for the project.

**Community Health Center PPD pilot:** Jessie Colbert updated the group and answered questions about the Commission's Community Health Center PPD pilot program, which was also funded in the FY '14

budget. The program will support part-time Community Health Workers at four sites (determined primarily by the Mass. League of Community Health Centers: Holyoke Health Center, Lynn Community Health Center, Southern Jamaica Plain Health Center, and Family Health Center of Worcester), to assist doctors with screening and referrals, as well as to support new moms generally and help them access other helpful local services.

### **3. Reports on other new and ongoing initiatives**

**Medicaid screening coverage:** Rep. Story expressed her and others' strong, ongoing interest in establishing Medicaid coverage for PPD screening in the pediatric setting, for which she and other leaders have been pushing for years, through both CBHI (the Children's Behavioral Health Initiative) and other avenues.

Rossana Valencia, the Project Manager on this issue for MassHealth, responded. Rossana indicated that MassHealth has established an internal stakeholder workgroup on PPD screening, with three objectives: selecting and developing a process for implementing screening among MassHealth members; establishing a mechanism to monitor and evaluate screening; and informing and educating providers and members about screening and follow-up services. She said that in the obstetric setting, women should already be being screened as part of the bundled payment for pregnancy, and added that multiple screens need to be included in different practice areas. She said the workgroup's process will likely be a lengthy one.

**DPH regulations:** Beth Buxton updated the group on DPH's regulations to collect data on screening, which are now being reviewed by the Executive Office of Health and Human Services. She expects that their approval will be finalized in spring '14.

**Other reports and announcements:** Jessie announced Dr. Gold's excellent recent blog post, [Investing in early childhood means investing in infants](#). She also told the Commission about the [Blue Dot Project](#), which recently contacted her. The project is based out of the Postpartum Health Alliance in San Diego, and sells bumper stickers that help reduce stigma around PPD, the sale of which support PPD-related grant projects.

Dr. Claire Levesque shared that she had contacted Dr. Patricia Falcao of Mass. Medical Society's Perinatal Health and Welfare Committee, who expressed interest in having a Commission member present to their group about our work. Dr. Levesque said she would follow up and report back to the Commission.

Annette Cycon from MotherWoman announced their upcoming support group leader trainings.

Peggy reported that she will be offering a presentation at an upcoming conference in Arizona about Jewish Family and Children's Service's work with mother-baby dyads impacted by substance abuse, Project NESST (Newborns Exposed to Substances: Support and Therapy).

### **4. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned.

