

Massachusetts Special Legislative Commission on Postpartum Depression (PPD)
Wednesday, January 15, 2014, 5:30-7:30 PM
House Members' Lounge, State House, Boston

Minutes

Commissioners present: Khadeejah Ahmed (on behalf of Commissioner Rep. James O'Day); Kristin Alexander; Dr. Lee Cohen; Karen Crowley; Gail DeRiggi (on behalf of Commissioner Thomas 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; Giovanni Maffeo (on behalf of Commissioner Sen. Joan Lovely); Dr. Alison Schonwald; Dr. Joshua Sparrow; Eileen Terlaga; Lisa Waxman; Dr. Michael Yogman.

Commissioners absent: Representative Ellen Story (Chair); Sen. Thomas McGee (Chair); Rep. Kimberly Ferguson; Sen. Jennifer Flanagan; Dr. Janice Goodman; Sen. Richard Moore; Dr. Tiffany Moore Simas; Rep. Denise Provost; Sen. Richard Ross; Rep. Tom Sannicandro; Nancy Schwartz; Dr. Jayne Singer; Commissioner Thomas Weber.

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

Special guests present: Kathleen Biebel, Program Director, MCPAP for Moms; Marcy Ravech, Director, Mass. Child Psychiatry Access Project (MCPAP); Dr. John Straus, Director of Special Projects, Mass. Behavioral Health Partnership; Rossana Valencia, Project Manager, MassHealth.

Other staff members present: Jessie Colbert, PPD Commission Director and aide to Rep. Story; Amanda Jusino, aide to Rep. Story.

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

1. Welcome; approval of minutes

Jessie Colbert announced that she would be chairing the meeting because Rep. Story was not able to attend due to a personal issue. The Commission approved the minutes from the September 2013 meeting (with edits regarding MCPAP for Moms that had been distributed to members).

2. Update and discussion of Mass. Child Psychiatry Access Project (MCPAP) PPD expansion, MCPAP for Moms

Dr. John Straus updated the group on the MCPAP for Moms project, which will provide phone consultation to maternal providers (and later pediatricians) on PPD and other perinatal mental health issues, beginning this summer. MCPAP for Moms will also offer training, care coordination, and assistance with building community awareness of PPD in local areas across the state. Dr. Straus provided some background on the MCPAP program generally, and on the impetus for expanding it in this way.

Liz Friedman shared further details on the community support component of MCPAP for Moms. Through MotherWoman, the program will expand support groups for struggling moms across the state, and work with six new communities (to be determined through an RFR) to build awareness of PPD and treatment resources among community members (WIC workers, doctors, early intervention providers, etc.). Margaret Hannah updated the group on the list of providers she will be developing and maintaining for the referral and care coordination portion of the project.

Survivor Jamie Belsito shared her experience with postpartum obsessive compulsive disorder, and her difficulty finding treatment.

The group discussed how we can work on expanding treatment capacity. Dr. Straus, Dr. Lee Cohen and others addressed how MCPAP for Moms will work on this by training primary care providers to treat moms and adding support groups around the state. Dr. Gordon Harper, Dr. Julie Johnston, Dr. Michael Yogman and others discussed insurance and other payment issues, as well as how we might expand awareness through public media. Dr. Johnston said that some of her patients in Lawrence lose their health insurance coverage while they're on waiting lists for PPD treatment.

3. Reports and discussion of other initiatives

Commission presentation to Mass. Medical Society (MMS): Dr. Claire Levesque reported on her and others' presentation for MMS's Maternal and Perinatal Welfare Committee on November 4. The Committee was very enthusiastic about MCPAP for Moms and the Commission's work; the latter will be featured in the June edition of the MMS newsletter, *Vital Signs*. The Committee expressed interest in the possibility of making PPD the subject of Mass. ACOG's annual conference in September. Jessie offered to provide the group with a sample letter to help them advocate for this decision.

Medicaid screening coverage: Rossana Valencia and Dr. Monica Le updated the group on the efforts of MassHealth's working group on PPD. They offered details on the various challenges the group has encountered, such as how screening could be included in a global payment in the obstetric setting. They also reported that any new initiative would need to be revenue neutral, because there is no additional funding in the FY '15 budget for screening. They indicated that the Children's Behavioral Health Initiative (CBHI) is adding two new screening tools that include questions on maternal mental health.

Dr. Yogman expressed concerns about these screening tools (PHQ2, etc.), and contended that adding maternal screening would indeed be revenue neutral. Other Commissioners discussed additional payment and coding concerns.

DPH regulations: Beth Buxton provided an update on the approval process for new regulations requiring providers to report screening. The regulations still must be approved by the legal office of the Executive Office of Health and Human Services and reviewed in public hearings across the state.

Other reports and announcements: The group continued its discussion of MCPAP for Moms. There was some concern that the program be able to address the wide spectrum of perinatal mental health challenges, and represent itself that way (i.e., not just talk about "PPD" in materials). Dr. Cohen (who will be a consultant on the project) and Dr. Straus were reassuring that MCPAP for Moms will address anxiety and other issues.

Dr. Alison Schonwald asked whether the referral resources MCPAP for Moms was developing made use of the information collected by the Commission in 2012. Jessie and Margaret indicated that they do, but Margaret cautioned that it is challenging to maintain accurate information when providers and groups are always changing.

Peggy Kaufman offered the assistance of a group of colleagues for MCPAP for Moms; the group, Clinical Conversations, came together in 1999 for a postpartum depression conference and has met regularly since then for training and networking.

Beth and Divya Kumar updated the group on the Community Health Center pilot program, which is funding Community Health Workers and other supports to help in practices where doctors are screening for PPD, to help moms connect with resources (both for mental health issues and other needs). Beth reported that the four sites have screened approximately 100 moms so far, and Divya reported on preparations to make home visits and her other work through the project at the Southern Jamaica Plain Health Center.

Liz announced that she and Joy Burkhard of the 2020 Moms Project in California would be presenting on legislative and programmatic innovations addressing perinatal mental health issues at the Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs conference later in the month. She also reported on a recent MotherWoman webinar on their support group model, with participants as far away as Saudi Arabia.

Beth announced the upcoming 20th Anniversary Partners in Perinatal Health conference on May 6-7, featuring a keynote speech by Jeanne Watson Driscoll.

After some further discussion, Annette Cycon from MotherWoman encouraged the group to consider the strength of our efforts as a survivor- and provider-led movement to address critical maternal mental health issues.

4. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned.