

The Ellen Story Commission on Postpartum Depression (PPD)
Wednesday, May 3rd, 2017, 5:30-7:30 PM
Room 428, State House, Boston

Minutes

Commissioners present: Senator Joan Lovely (Chair), Representative Jim O’Day (Chair); Dr. Barrie Baker; Rebecca Butler; Jessie Colbert; Karin Downs, Gail DeRiggi (on behalf of Commissioner Thomas Weber); Elizabeth Fluet; Liz Friedman; Margaret Hannah; Divya Kumar; Peggy Kaufman; Dr. Monica Le; Dr. Michael Yogman.

Commissioners absent: Kristen Alexander; Jamie Belsito; ; Dr. Lee Cohen ; Karen Crowley; Rep. Kimberly Ferguson; Sen. Jennifer Flanagan; Mary Elizabeth Gamache; Dr. Janice Goodman; Dr. Gordon Harper; Dr. Julie Johnston; Kerry LaBounty; Sen. Thomas McGee; Dr. Tiffany Moore-Simas; Rep. Denise Provost; Sen. Richard Ross; Dr. Alison Schonwald; Dr. Jayne Singer; Dr. Joshua Sparrow; Eileen Terlaga.

Commission staff present: Yaminette Diaz-Linhart, Commission Director and Johanna Wakelin, Legislative Director for Senator Lovely

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

1. Welcome; approval of minutes

Rep. O’Day welcomed Commission members and guests. The Commission approved the minutes from the January 27th 2017 meeting.

2. May is Maternal Mental Health Month

Sen. Lovely reported on the status of the Governor’s proclamation and a joint resolution for May as Maternal Mental Health Awareness month and on the status of the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act.

3. Fathers and Postpartum Depression

Dr. Michael Yogman introduced a local father, Matt Marotta, part of a local fathers group who discussed his experiences on becoming a father and struggling with depression after the birth of his first child. Mr. Marotta spoke of the isolation experienced by men when they become fathers, especially since the focus is on the mother and child, and men are not traditionally seen as needing support during their transition to fatherhood. Other themes included barriers to accessing quality mental health treatment for fathers as well as the lack of social networks for fathers that help reduce isolation. Commission members and other attendees asked Mr. Marotta questions on how to best support the mental health of men their transition to fatherhood.

4. Panel Discussion with state-wide PPD coalitions and task forces

A panel discussion with state-wide PPD coalitions and taskforces was organized by the Commission Director. Five different task forces and coalitions (listed below) presented on the following questions of each coalition/task force: 1) the history; 2) the goals; 3) the accomplishments or success; 4) the challenges; and finally 5) a “take away” for the Commission.

- Elizabeth Brown presented on Pentucket Perinatal Mental Health Coalition
- Kitt Cox, presented on North Shore Postpartum Help (formerly North Shore Postpartum Depression Task Force)

- Annamarie K.H. Golden presented on Perinatal Support Coalition of Hampden County: Holyoke, Springfield, Westfield
- Linda Jablonski presented on the Franklin County Perinatal support Coalition
- Joy Richmond-Smith presented on the Greater Lynn Postpartum Help Coalition

Themes across the topic areas discussed included:

- PPD coalitions/task forces started out of necessity for coordination and resources for local mothers and families who were not being served through traditional healthcare settings. The range of years in existence ranged from 17 years ago to 1.5 years, and the group thanked Mary Wilson who started the Cape Cod coalition, and Peggy Kaufman, a PPD Commissioner, as founding figures of these coalitions/task forces.
- Goals for each coalition/task force included:
 - offering a triaging system for the local community
 - providing education and training to local providers
 - creating a support network for mothers and families
 - creating protocols for systematic screening and referrals within health care or other non-profit organizational systems
 - reducing stigma
 - advocating for PPD
- Accomplishments for coalitions/task forces included:
 - Accomplishing stated goals, including developing systems for triaging, screening, referring
 - Supporting mothers and families on an ongoing and as needed basis through groups or individual-level work
 - Developing coordinated referral resources and network of quality mental health providers and other basic resources, like diapers
 - Outreach and training to local agencies
- Major challenges for coalition/task forces included lack of sustainable funding to continue the work and lack of coordination across the state on PPD-related work in a centralized and coordinated manner
- Final “take aways” included increasing sustainable funding, centralized and coordinated resources and quality specialized mental health treatment that reflects the diverse perspectives of women and families impacted by PPD

5. Reports and discussion of PPD initiatives

- Dr. Cindy Liu gave an update on a new research study she is working on related to maternal mental health
- PPD Awareness Day June 13th 2017
- PPD Commission Directory reminder for Commission members
- Other reports and announcements
 - Beth Buxton from DPH presented an update on PPD screening and reporting, including that PPD screening data will be part of the 2017 annual report on PPD activities.

- Dr. Jacqueline Ocana from Lynn Community Health Center gave a brief report on the Lynn PPD Pilot
- Johanna Wakelin was introduced as Sen. Lovely's new Legislative Director
- Dr. Monica Le from MassHealth reported on updates to PPD screening
- Liz Friedman reported on initiatives by the National Coalition for Maternal Mental Health on the federal level, in which Jamie Belsito has played a key part
- Divya Kumar is collaborating on an initiative specifically on maternal mental health for women of color

6. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned.