

Commonwealth of Massachusetts General Court

The Ellen Story Commission on Postpartum Depression

2022 Annual Report

Report Submitted on June 30th 2022

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June 30, 2022

His Excellency, Charlie Baker
Governor of the Commonwealth
State House, Room 360
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Senator Karen E. Spilka
President of the Senate
State House, Room 332
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Representative Robert Mariano
Speaker of the House
State House, Room 356
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Governor Baker, President Spilka, and Speaker Mariano:

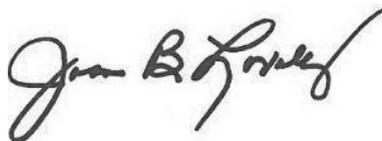
On behalf of the Ellen Story Commission on Postpartum Depression, and in accordance with Chapter 313 of the Acts of 2010, we present you with the Commission's annual report.

The Commission has continued to make excellent progress over the last year on the issue of perinatal mental health, which would not have been possible without your support. The Department of Public Health (DPH) has continued to be an invaluable partner, and MCPAP for Moms and the PPD Pilot Programs continue to support many women and families across the Commonwealth. In particular, the MCPAP for Moms' collaboration with Postpartum Support International has done a great deal to expand access to support resources for the Commonwealth's families. Additionally, the Biden-Harris administration's focus on maternal mental health on the national level has spotlighted the issue like never before, and provided the momentum to make things like the new National Maternal Mental Health Hotline (launched in May) a reality. The Commission plans to seize upon this momentum to continue to press forward in its work for Massachusetts families.

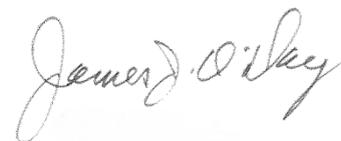
We are deeply grateful for your continued support for MassHealth's reimbursement policy to cover the cost of PPD screening across the Commonwealth. The routine screening and referral mechanisms we have established in the perinatal and postpartum period across the Commonwealth are making an essential impact on the well-being of women and families, but we know there is more work to be done. Rates of reported screening show that there are women with PPD who are not being identified, and significant racial and ethnic inequities persist within both screening and incidence rates. The current disparities in outcomes and access to resources for pregnant and postpartum women of color in particular presents another urgent and under-resourced need that the Commission has worked diligently over the past year to address. With new guidance from the Racial Inequities in Maternal Health Commission's comprehensive report (released in May), we will continue to work to achieve equitable health outcomes for parents of color.

Thank you again for your support. We hope you find this report informative.

Sincerely,



Joan B. Lovely
State Senator



James O'Day
State Representative

Enabling Statute of the Commission

The Acts of 2010

Chapter 313. AN ACT RELATIVE TO POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same as follows:

The department of public health may consult with health care providers, including, but not limited to, obstetricians, gynecologists, pediatricians and primary care providers, nonprofits and health insurance carriers regarding postpartum depression to develop a culture of awareness, de-stigmatization and screening for perinatal depression so that residents of the commonwealth may be assured of the most effective and affordable provision of public health services possible. The department shall develop standards for measuring effective screening for postpartum depression using recognized clinical standards and best practices and shall make recommendations for health plan and health care provider data reporting. The department shall issue regulations that require providers and carriers to annually submit data on screening for postpartum depression. Following the receipt of the data, the commissioner of public health shall issue an annual summary of the activities related to screening for postpartum depression, including best practices and effective screening tools. The department shall annually file the summary with the commissioner of public health and the clerks of the house of representatives and the senate not later than June 30; provided, however, that the first report is due not later than June 30, 2011.

There is hereby established a special legislative commission, pursuant to section 2A of chapter 4 of the General Laws, to be known as the Ellen Story commission on postpartum depression, to consist of 5 members of the senate, 1 of whom shall be a member of the minority party appointed by the minority leader, 1 of whom shall serve as co-chair, 5 members of the house of representatives, 1 of whom shall be a member of the minority party appointed by the minority leader, 1 of whom shall serve as co-chair, the commissioner of the department of public health, the commissioner of the department of mental health, the commissioner of insurance, the commissioner of the department of children and families, the commissioner of early education and care, and the director of Medicaid, or their designees, all of whom shall serve as ex officio members, and 18 persons to be appointed by the governor, 1 of whom shall be a representative of the Massachusetts chapter of the National Association of Social Workers, 1 of whom shall be appointed jointly by the Massachusetts Midwives Association and the Massachusetts Affiliate of the American College of Nurse Midwives who shall be a midwife licensed to practice in the commonwealth, 1 of whom shall be a representative from the Nurses United for Responsible Services who shall be an advanced practice psychiatric nurse, 1 of whom shall be a representative from the Massachusetts Coalition of Nurse Practitioners who shall be a nurse practitioner, 1 of whom shall be a representative of the Massachusetts Psychological Association who shall be a psychologist, 1 of whom shall be a representative from the children's behavioral health advisory council established in section 16Q of chapter 6A of the General Laws, 1 of whom shall be a representative from the Massachusetts Behavioral Health Partnership or a managed care organization or managed care entity contracting with MassHealth, 5 of whom shall be representatives of the Massachusetts Medical Society appointed in consultation with their relevant specialty chapters, including a pediatrician, an obstetrician, a family physician, a psychiatrist and a child and adolescent psychiatrist, 1 of whom shall be a woman who has experienced postpartum depression, 1 of whom shall be a representative from a regionally-based nonprofit group currently serving women suffering from postpartum depression, 1 of whom shall be a representative from the Massachusetts Association of Health Plans and 3 of whom shall be representatives from commercial health insurance carriers or managed care organizations doing business in the commonwealth, is hereby established for the purpose of making an investigation and study relative to postpartum depression, including, but not limited to: (i) an assessment of current research on the subject and whether there exist evidence-based, best or promising practices on the prevention, detection or treatment of postpartum depression; (ii) a review of current policies and practices with respect to screenings for postpartum depression, including the frequency and location of screenings and training personnel administering the screenings, the availability of reimbursement and issues relative to medical necessity and third-party coverage; (iii) provision of assistance to the department of public health, other state agencies and

organizations in the development of professional and public educational materials and programs on postpartum depression, in the development of referral lists for postpartum depression treatment, building on existing resources and in the designation of authorized validated screening tools; (iv) provision of assistance to the department of public health, other state agencies and organizations relative to applications for federal funding to support efforts consistent with the mission and purpose of the commission; and (v) any other matters that the commission considers relevant to the fulfillment of its mission and purpose. The co-chairs of the commission may each appoint up to 3 additional commission members to fulfill the purpose of the commission.

Said commission shall provide guidance and advice to the governor, the general court and the secretary of health and human services relative to current research on postpartum depression including, but not limited to, best and promising practices in the prevention, detection and treatment of postpartum depression and recommend policies, including legislation, to promote greater public awareness, screening and treatment of postpartum depression. The special commission may conduct public hearings, forums or meetings to gather information and to raise awareness of postpartum depression, including the sponsorship of or participation in statewide or regional conferences.

Said commission shall file an annual report at the end of each state fiscal year with the governor and the clerks of the house of representatives and the senate, who shall forward the same to the joint committee on public health and the joint committee on financial services, along with recommendations, if any, together with drafts of legislation necessary to carry those recommendations into effect. The special commission may file such interim reports and recommendations as it considers appropriate.

Approved, August 19, 2010; Amended November 2, 2015 and December 19, 2016

List of Commission Members

Sen. Joan Lovely, Co-Chair

Rep. James O'Day, Co-Chair

Lauren Almeida, Department of Children and Families, Designee

Rebecca Butler, Commissioner of Insurance, Designee

Dr. Lee Cohen, Psychiatrist, Massachusetts Medical Society

Jessie Colbert, House Co-Chair Appointment

Rep. Mindy Domb, House Member

Karin Downs, Department of Public Health, Designee

Rep. Kimberly N. Ferguson, House Member

Jill Fieleke, Massachusetts Association of Advanced Practice Psychiatric Nurses

Rep. Carole Fiola, House Member

Karen Garber, National Association of Social Workers

Kate Ginnis, Director of Medicaid, Designee

Sen. Anne Gobi, Senate Member

Nneka Hall, Senate Co-Chair Appointment

Dr. Julie Johnston, Family Physician, Massachusetts Medical Society

Acting Commissioner Amy Kershaw, Department of Early Education and Care

Divya Kumar, A woman who has experienced postpartum depression

Kerry LaBounty, Health New England, Commercial health insurance representative

Dr. Nadja Lopez-Reilly, Representative from a regionally-based nonprofit group currently serving women suffering from postpartum depression

Timoria McQueen Saba, House Co-Chair Appointment

Rep. Liz Miranda, House Member

Dr. Leena Mittal, Senate Co-Chair Appointment

Elizabeth Murphy, Esq., Massachusetts Association of Health Plans

Margarita O'Neill-Arana, Department of Mental Health, Designee

Sen. Becca Rausch, Senate Member

Dr. Lisa Scarfo, AllWays Health Partners, managed care organization representative

Dr. Tiffany A. Moore Simas, Obstetrician, Massachusetts Medical Society

Dr. Jayne Singer, Massachusetts Psychological Association

Dr. Joshua Sparrow, Child Psychiatrist, Massachusetts Medical Society

Sen. Bruce Tarr, Senate Member

Dr. Michael Yogman, Children's Behavioral Health Advisory

Summary of Meetings and Events

Meeting 36 - October 20, 2021 (virtual)

Ashley Healy, the new Commission Coordinator, introduced herself.

Ms. Healy discussed the results of an informal survey that had been circulated to commissioners asking them to identify their top priority items on which to focus the commission's attention.

The top three identified priorities were: professional education, including antiracism training; accessibility/availability of community and peer support for maternal mental health; and insurance coverage for maternal mental health, generally.

Other items that numerous commissioners selected included: accessibility/availability of PPD screening, including in underserved or rural areas and in non-English speaking populations; public education on maternal mental health, generally; public education, including how birthing people may access mental health care; substance use disorders as they relate to maternal mental health; accessibility/availability of midwifery care and community birth options; and PPD screening practices and tools, generally.

Commissioners discussed ideas around how to incorporate these priorities into the Commission's work.

Commissioner Nneka Hall gave a presentation about her proposed Mother Is Supreme postpartum care initiative and some obstacles that arose in trying to obtain funding for it in the FY22 budget.

Meeting 37 - January 4, 2022 (virtual)

This supplemental meeting was held to discuss the process by which commissioners are nominated, interviewed, and selected for service on the Commission. The discussion included ways to ensure that both professional experience and lived experience in perinatal mental health are considered during the process.

Meeting 38 - January 12, 2022 (virtual)

During this meeting, Commissioners presented ideas for potential themes for the 7th Annual Perinatal Mental Health Awareness Day.

Commissioners also had a discussion about potential amendments to the Commission's enabling statute, including adding or removing certain seat designations, increasing the

amount of direct service providers on the Commission, and incorporating by-laws to assist with procedural items like commissioner selections and term limits.

Meeting 39 - January 26, 2022 (virtual)

This brief supplemental meeting was held so that commissioners could take a vote to approve a theme for the 7th Annual Perinatal Mental Health Awareness Day. Commissioners voted unanimously to approve the (roughly entitled) theme of “The Road Perinatal Mental Health Has Traveled, and the Road That Lies Ahead.”

Meeting 40 - April 13, 2022 (virtual)

At this meeting, the Commission welcomed a new Commissioner, Karen Garber LICSW CEIS IMH-C, as the representative of the Massachusetts chapter of the National Association of Social Workers.

Representative Jamie Belsito and Commissioner Nneka Hall gave a legislative update on H.4557, An Act Relative to Pregnancy Loss.

Commissioners heard a presentation from Commissioner Michael Yogman, MD and Mark Friedman, MD FAAP, a retired pediatrician, about implementing PPD screening for fathers during the four-month infant well visit with the pediatrician. Following the presentation, commissioners discussed the need for increased perinatal mental health support services and workforce (both institutional and within communities) so that there is somewhere to refer parents who screen positive, because screening is not enough without the ability to access help and support.

Commissioner Jessie Colbert announced that her organization, the Mass PPD Fund, has been selected as the Massachusetts Leader for Mind the Gap’s State Policy series, which engages stakeholders to work together to identify a goal and take strategic actions to advance perinatal mental health policy. This is something to which the Commission can contribute ideas and participation.

7th Annual Perinatal Mental Health Awareness Day - May 17, 2022 (virtual)

The seventh annual Perinatal Mental Health Awareness Day was held virtually. The event theme was The Path Perinatal Mental Health Has Traveled, and the Path that Lies Ahead. Lt. Governor Karyn Polito and Co-Chairs Senator Joan Lovely and Representative Jim O’Day presented opening remarks, and Commissioner Representative Liz Miranda gave closing remarks. The program consisted of three presentations. Please see Appendix I for the program and speaker lineup.

Future Goals

In the coming year, the Commission will continue to work on multiple projects promoting, expanding, and improving screening, treatment, and awareness of perinatal mental health for mothers and fathers, as well as ensuring that adequate, accessible, and culturally-appropriate resources exist to support parents at the institutional and community levels.

The Commission also will work to address the disparities that parents of color face during the perinatal period, with the goal of alleviating the impact that structural racism and unequal access to perinatal mental health care have on communities of color. The Commission will investigate and determine ways to address the cultural and geographic inequities that create barriers to access to perinatal mental health care across the Commonwealth. In pursuing these goals, the Commission will consider and implement the recommendations made by the Racial Inequities in Maternal Health commission.

The Commission's work and findings will be shared locally and nationally through the Commission's website: ppdcommission.com, Twitter: twitter.com/ppdcommission, and Instagram: [instagram.com/ppdcommission](https://www.instagram.com/ppdcommission). The Commission will continue to assist MCPAP for Moms and the PPD Community Health Center pilot programs through continued advocacy and legislative support. Finally, the Commission will pursue other goals as determined by the Commission.

Appendix I: 2022 Perinatal Mental Health Awareness Day Program and Speakers



PERINATAL MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS DAY:

The Path PMH Has Traveled, and the Path That Lies Ahead

Tuesday, May 17, 2022, 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

PROGRAM

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Karyn Polito, Lieutenant Governor of Massachusetts

Senator Joan B. Lovely and Representative James J. O'Day, Co-chairs of the Ellen Story Commission on Postpartum Depression

MCPAP for Moms - Presentation

Nancy Byatt, DO, MS, MBA, Medical Director, MCPAP for Moms

Commissioner Leena Mittal, MD, FACLP, Associate Medical Director, MCPAP for Moms

Tiffany York, Postpartum Support International--MA Chapter

Out-of-Hospital Birth Care Model - Panel Discussion

Emily Anesta, Baystate Birth Coalition

Karina Tuting, mother and advocate

Tiffany Vassell, RN

Susanna Mauzy, CPM

Moderated by Commissioner Jessie Colbert, Founder, Mass PPD Fund

Screening and Uplifting Fathers - Presentation

Commissioner Michael Yogan, MD

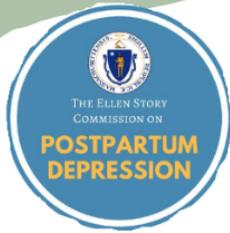
Mark Friedman, MD, FAAP

Leonard Tshitenge, Fathers Uplift

Daniel Rodrigues, LICSW, PMH-C, Duffy Health Center

Closing Remarks and Call to Action

Commissioner Representative Liz Miranda



MCPAP for Moms

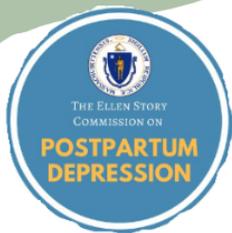
Dr. Nancy Byatt and PPD Commissioner Dr. Leena Mittal will discuss how this groundbreaking program builds providers' capacity to prevent, identify, and manage mental health and substance use concerns in pregnant and postpartum people. This presentation also will describe the partnership between MCPAP for Moms and PSI-MA to further improve mental health outcomes for Massachusetts families.

Leena Mittal,
MD, FACLP, MS, FACLP



Nancy Byatt,
DO, MS, MBA, FACLP





Out-of-Hospital Birth Care Model



Emily Anesta,

Baystate Birth Coalition

Susanna Mauzy, CPM



Our panelists will discuss how midwifery and a patient-centered care model can improve health outcomes for birthing people and their infants, and how integrating and expanding the accessibility of this care model empowers families to make the birthing choice that is right for them.

Moderator:

Commissioner Jessie Colbert,

Mass PPD Fund



Tiffany Vassell, RN

Karina Tuting





Supporting and Uplifting Fathers

In this roundtable discussion, learn how screening for perinatal depression in and providing community and peer supports for non-gestational partners can lead to improved outcomes for families and communities.

Mark Friedman,
MD, FAAP



Daniel Rodrigues, LICSW
Duffy Health Center



Leonard Tshitenge
Fathers' Uplift



Michael Yogman, MD
PPD Commissioner

