



**Ellen Story Commission on Postpartum Depression
Quarterly Meeting - October 20, 2021**

MEETING MINUTES

Commissioners present: Rep. Jim O'Day (co-chair), Sen. Joan Lovely (co-chair), Rep. Liz Miranda, Rep. Mindy Domb, Margarita O'Neill-Arana, Margot Tracy, Jill Fieleke, Tiffany Moore Simas, Lisa Scarfo, Karin Downs, Lauren Almeida, Liz Murphy, Nneka Hall, Divya Kumar, Timoria McQueen Saba, Jessie Colbert, Leena Mittal, Michael Yogman, Jayne Singer, Lisa Scarfo, Alana Westwater (on behalf of Sen. Becca Rausch), Kerry LaBounty, Martha Kwasnik (Deputy GC of Division of Insurance, in place of Rebecca Butler), Peggy Kaufman

Commissioners absent: Rep. Carole Fiola, Sen. Bruce Tarr, Sen. Anne Gobi, Sen. John Keenan, Samantha Aigner-Treworgy, Kim Ferguson, Lauren Almeida, Nadja Reilly, Lee Cohen, Julie Johnston, Joshua Sparrow

Others present: Karen Garber, Benjamin S. Klein, Nancy Byatt, Beth Buxton

I. Welcome and Introductions

-Co-chair Representative Jim O'Day, Co-Chair Senator Joan Lovely, and Commission Coordinator Ashley Healy welcomed commissioners and guests, and announced that the meeting was being recorded and that the Commission adheres to open meeting law. Ms. Healy introduced herself. Commissioners introduced themselves and the organizations they represent.

-The Commission approved the minutes from the 6.29.21 meeting.

II. Follow up on previous question regarding ex officio commissioners

-Ms. Healy relayed the following information left by former coordinator: Ex officio commissioners may vote, sit on sub-committees, and participate in other activities, similar to non-ex officio commissioners. The organizations the ex officio Commissioners represent, however, may have additional guidelines on how these members can participate, including how, if at all, the commissioner can vote on a particular issue. We recommend

that ex officio Commissioners contact their organization for clarification on any limits the organization wishes to place on the commissioner's participation in the Commission.

III. Legislative update

-Ms. Healy listed bills that have been heard and are pending in committees. These included:

-H.1878/S1085 - An Act relative to the well-being of new mothers and infants

-H.2285 - An Act relative to PPD screening

-H.2341/S.1519 - An Act relative to out of hospital access and safety

-H.2372/S.1475 - An Act relative to Medicaid coverage for doula services

-A legislative hearing on H.2337 - An Act establishing a special commission to study the integration of support groups into our healthcare system is coming up on October 28th. Ms. Healy will send out information to the Commission about the hearing.

-Commissioner Representative Liz Miranda discussed movement in the House and Senate where birthing justice and maternal health is something people are talking about and supporting.

IV. Presentation by Coordinator Ashley Healy on Commissioner survey results

-Ms. Healy created a survey in which Commissioners could rank various issues related to perinatal mental health in the order in which they would like to prioritize those issues in the Commission's work.

-Thirteen commissioners responded to the survey.

-The issue that received the most votes (8) was "Professional education, including antiracism training."

-The other top voted issues (6 votes each) were:

- "Accessibility/availability of community and peer support for MMH [maternal mental health]"

- "Insurance coverage for MMH, generally"

-Majority of commissioners were unsure whether they would like to participate in more informal Commission events outside of quarterly meetings.

-100% of commissioners responded that they would like to receive periodic email communications from the Coordinator concerning legislation, upcoming events, etc.

-Ms. Healy presented examples of ways to gather information for investigation and study of the identified topics, and examples of action items commissioners may want to pursue once information is gathered.

V. Discussion on survey results and desired actions for Commission

-Commissioner Tiffany Moore Simas explained that physicians and others who are boarded have requirements around continuing education, and it seems like antiracism training would be something that would be required.

-Commissioner Jayne Singer suggested that the Commission must call in specifically what is most burning and necessary and imperative about antiracism training in relation to parental mental health.

-Commissioner Timoria Saba indicated that we must engage with Black people and other people of color, and because racism is institutionalized, it must be addressed across the board. Commissioner Saba emphasized the importance of letting Black people lead, and of viewing them as leaders in the communities that we want to help.

-Commissioner Divya Kumar pointed out that a lot of the points that were voted for in the survey are hit by Mother IS Supreme.

-Commissioner Margot Tracy asked whether we can work with the other commissions. Co-Chair Rep. O'Day responded that we can check in on the Racial Inequities in Maternal Health Commission. Commissioner Saba explained that it is a one year commission that is charged with writing a report and is focused on maternal and infant mortality.

-Commissioner Kumar underscored that whatever the Commission does must integrate an antiracist lens, and that maternal mental health cannot be done without antiracism.

-Co-Chair Sen. Lovely stated that there are open spots on the Commission and asked commissioners to please refer women of color for these seats.

VI. Presentation by Commissioner Nneka Hall on Mother IS Supreme and State Budget line item 4510 - 0112

-Since the last Commission meeting, Commissioner Hall submitted a budget proposal to the PPD Commission, which Senators Lovely and Rausch presented.

-Changes were made to the language of line item 4510-0112 in June. It no longer included Mattapan, Dorchester, Hyde Park, Roxbury, or Brockton, and Jamaica Plain, Salem, and Lynn had been added. Governor Baker disapproved the item, but the legislature overrode the veto.

-Commissioner Hall was told that her proposal would have been received more favorably if she had had both a House and Senate person to support her. She is unsure of whether this means that the Department of Public Health will not work with her.

-Co-Chair Rep. O'Day recalled filing this on the House side and would confirm.

-Commissioner Karin Downs, on behalf of DPH, stated that if there is funding and DPH is identified as the agency through whom it would pass, DPH would be delighted to work with Commissioner Hall on this. DPH is completely supportive of the Mother IS Supreme project.

VII. Announcements

-Open Commission seats

-Commissioner Leena Mittal asked how we can get Postpartum Support International a seat on the Commission. Co-Chair Rep. O'Day stated that we may need a legislative amendment and that if we are going to do this, then we should consider whether there are any other changes we want to make and do them all at once rather than piecemeal. We may even be able to switch out the seats of agencies that have not had a representative on the Commission in quite some time.

-Commissioner Jessie Colbert's organization, Mass PPD Fund, is circulating a survey to guide its strategic planning efforts. Ms. Healy will distribute this survey to the commissioners.