

Massachusetts Special Legislative Commission on Postpartum Depression (PPD)
Wednesday, January 9, 5:30-7:30 PM
House Members' Lounge, State House, Boston

Minutes

Commissioners present: Representative Ellen Story (Chair); Dr. Lee Cohen; Elizabeth Fluet; Liz Friedman; Mary Elizabeth Gamache; Dr. Gordon Harper; Peggy Kaufman; Commissioner Sherri Killins; Kerry LaBounty; Dr. Monica Le; Neal Michaels; Dr. Tiffany Moore Simas; Rep. Denise Provost; Rep. Tom Sannicandro; Dr. Alison Schonwald; Dr. Joshua Sparrow; Eileen Terlaga; Dr. Michael Yogman.

Commissioners absent: Sen. Thomas McGee (Chair); Karen Crowley; Karin Downs; Rep. Kimberly Ferguson; Sen. Jennifer Flanagan; Dr. Janice Goodman; Dr. Julie Johnston; Dr. Claire Levesque; Mary McKendry; Sen. Richard Moore; Rep. James O'Day; Sen. Richard Ross; Nancy Schwartz; Dr. Jayne Singer; Lisa Waxman.

Subcommittee members present: Margaret Hannah; Chris Just; Dr. Ruth Paris.

Speakers present: Emily Sherwood, Director, Children's Behavioral Health Initiative, Executive Office of Health and Human Services.

Staff members present: Jessie Colbert, Aide to Rep. Story; Hannah Oakley, 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 attendees. Those in attendance re-introduced themselves to the group. Commissioners approved the minutes from the October meeting.

2. Reports on new and ongoing initiatives

Medicaid screening reimbursement: Emily Sherwood from the state's Children's Behavioral Health Initiative (CBHI) updated the Commission on progress establishing Medicaid coverage for PPD screening of new moms in the pediatric setting, in lieu of one of the early pediatric behavioral health screens called for by CBHI. Dr. Michael Yogman, who has also worked on this issue extensively, described the growing support for PPD screening in the pediatric community, both in Massachusetts and nationally. Emily and Commissioners also discussed the need for adequate training and referral resources for providers when screening coverage is established.

Pilot program budget amendment: Rep. Story discussed an amendment she is working on for the upcoming FY '14 budget debate, that would provide funding for a part-time staff person in two state community health centers to listen to new moms' concerns and help connect them with services, including for PPD. She introduced Divya Kumar, a Postpartum Doula in Jamaica Plain, who has been working on this with the Southern Jamaica Plain Community Health Center. Rep. Story told members about the Holyoke Health Center, the other potential site for the pilot, and the other good work they are doing there. Members discussed hopes and concerns about the project, including the importance of assessing outcomes.

The Happiest Baby: Rep. Story and Liz Fluet updated members about a fall presentation for the Commission by Dr. Harvey Karp, creator of *The Happiest Baby on the Block*, a book and DVD on infant soothing techniques. Members discussed the pluses and minuses of promoting these techniques, and the techniques' relationship with PPD.

Other reports and announcements: Beth Spong, the Executive Director of MotherWoman, announced their new grant to do a pilot program of their Community-based Perinatal Support Model at Baystate Health Systems in Springfield, including funding for program evaluation.

Rep. Denise Provost shared work going on in Somerville to educate early education providers about identifying PPD and connecting moms with local resources.

Commissioner Sherri Killins described work her agency is doing with Peggy Kaufman and Margaret Hannah, providing PPD identification training to Early Education and Care Community Engagement grantees.

Liz Friedman announced that she will be presenting the collaborative work of MotherWoman, DPH, and the Commission at the upcoming Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs (AMCHP) conference, along with Rep. Story and Beth Buxton.

3. Update from the Department of Public Health

Jessie Colbert passed along an update from Beth Buxton, who was not able to attend: DPH has drafted regulations on screening reporting, which are currently going through the agency's review process.

4. Mapping project presentation and discussion of next steps

Hannah Oakley presented the group with the map she developed with their help, indicating the locations (and brief descriptions) of PPD support groups and mental health clinicians with PPD expertise in Massachusetts. (The source of the listings were 21 Commission members and other state PPD experts who had contributed their own lists.)

Jessie thanked Hannah and said members should consider the best ways to use this information; would they like to work on creating a comprehensive referral guide, building on these listings? Or should members use the information the map provides to make recommendations about providing services where they are most needed?

The group discussed issues with creating a referral guide from the map, including questions about vetting, updating the listings, where it would be sited, and how creating and maintaining it would be funded. Members decided these issues would be discussed further in a conference call with interested Commissioners and subcommittee members.

5. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned.

Addendum to 1/9/13 Meeting Minutes: 2/26/13 Mapping Call

Participants: Peggy Kaufman (Commission Member); Lisa Waxman (Commission Member); Margaret Hannah (Commission Subcommittee Member); Jessie Colbert (Aide to Rep. Story); Hannah Oakley (Intern to Rep. Story).

1. Map and Commission Goals/Next Steps

Jessie reminded participants that the mapping project was originally conceived to help the Commission determine its recommendations. Therefore, this group – and the full Commission – should be thinking about what to do with the information provided by the map.

Should we try to make the map comprehensive, and turn it into a resource and referral guide? (Of course, this raises questions about vetting, updating, where to site it, etc.) Or, should the Commission use the information the map provides to recommend next steps that fill in gaps in services?

2. Vetting

Call participants discussed how we determine which support groups and clinicians are included on the map. Margaret recently learned that there are PPD support groups that do not indicate their focus in the groups' names, because of trouble attracting participants. Commissioners and others on the call felt this was problematic, and that the map should only include PPD groups that publicly indicate that this is their focus.

3. Training

Those on the call also discussed how the Commission might boost the number of mental health providers on the map by providing training on PPD. While the Commission itself does not have a budget for conferences/ trainings, perhaps member groups could pursue this, with the Commission playing a coordinating role. Trainings can also be a way for clinicians and others working with new mothers to build relationships, the group discussed.

Call participants looked forward to discussing these issues with the full Commission at the next meeting.