



**Ellen Story Commission on Postpartum Depression  
Quarterly Meeting - February 15, 2023**

**MEETING MINUTES**

Commissioners present: Rep. Jim O'Day (co-chair), Sen. Liz Miranda (co-chair), Johanna Wakelin on behalf of Sen. Joan Lovely, Rep. Carole Fiola, Rep. Mindy Domb, Rep. Kim Ferguson, Sen. Becca Rausch, Lauren Almeida, Rebecca Butler, Nadja Lopez Reilly, Tyreese Nicolas, Jen Gilbert, Divya Kumar, Margarita O'Neill-Arana, Beth Buxton, Karen Garber, Chloe Zera, Leena Mittal, Kerry LaBounty, Stephanie Crawford, Liz Murphy, Sarah Krinsky, Lisa Scarfo, Jayne Singer, Lee Cohen

Commissioners not present: Sen. Bruce Tarr, Sen. John Keenan, Tiffany Moore Simas, Nneka Hall, Timoria McQueen Saba, Jessie Colbert

Johnston? Sparrow?

Others: Julie Garner, Renee Rotolo, Jamie Belsito, Jamie Watson, members of the press, other members of the public

I. Welcome and Introductions

Coordinator Ashley Healy welcomed commissioners and guests. Ms. Healy announced that the meeting was being conducted pursuant to Open Meeting Law and Joint Rule 29A, and that the meeting was being recorded and livestreamed through the legislature's website.

Ms. Healy provided an overview of the Ellen Story Commission's mission and welcomed members of the press and public who were attending the meeting. Ms. Healy acknowledged that recent tragic events in Duxbury, MA had brought attention to perinatal mental health and perinatal mood and anxiety disorders.

The Commission proceeded to roll call.

Senator Liz Miranda announced that she had assumed the role of Senate Co-Chair for the Ellen Story Commission. Commissioners introduced themselves and the organizations they represent, and offered their congratulations to Senator Miranda. Three new commissioners—Tyreese Nicolas of MA Dept. of Early Education and Care, Chloe Zera, and Jennifer Gilbert-Cohen—introduced themselves.

The Commission voted unanimously to approve the minutes from the 10/27/22 quarterly meeting and 12/14/22 supplemental meeting.

## II. Announcements

Ms. Healy moved the Announcements portion of the agenda to the end of the meeting due to scheduling constraints for some of the commissioners in attendance.

## III. Legislative Updates

Ms. Healy gave a presentation on some of the new bills filed in the new 193rd legislative session related to the Ellen Story Commission's mission. Commissioners heard from Commissioner Sen. Becca Rausch, Commissioner Rep. Carole Fiola, Commissioner Rep. Mindy Domb, and Co-Chair Sen. Liz Miranda during the presentation on legislation of which they respectively are lead sponsors, including a birthing justice omnibus bill filed by Co-Chair Sen. Liz Miranda which is a work in progress and can be added to.

Ms. Healy moved on to address proposed legislation concerning postpartum psychosis. Ms. Healy reminded commissioners that, in the previous legislative session, *An Act relative to the wellbeing of new mothers and infants* had been filed and sent to study.

Ms. Healy shared a slide showing that bill's provisions, and explained that the bill had not been re-filed in the current session, as its sponsors had been considering how to make the legislation more robust, including by possibly adding proactive language.

Commissioners were asked to share any concerns about the bill's current language and content, and to apply their expertise to give input, ideas, and advice to the sponsors on how to strengthen and expand the bill to make it most

responsive to the needs of individuals struggling with perinatal psychiatric complications.

#### IV. Upcoming Events and Announcements

Ms. Healy reminded commissioners that International Bereaved Mother's Awareness Day would be happening on May 5th at the State House. Commissioners Nneka Hall and Stephanie Crawford have been organizing the event.

Commissioner Crawford addressed the Commission to say that the event would focus on Bereaved Mother's Day, raising awareness, with speakers and some activities. Ms. Healy stated that, rather than organize a separate event for the Annual Awareness Day, the Ellen Story Commission would seek to support and publicize the event, and provide assistance to the commissioners planning the event.

Ms. Healy shared on Commissioner Jayne Singer's behalf that the Center for Black Maternal Health and RJ will be hosting its 6th annual black maternal health conference on Fri. April 7th, with the theme of Centering the Role of Nurses and Midwives in Addressing the Black Maternal Health Crisis.

Ms. Healy shared that the Cape & Islands Maternal Depression Task Force will be putting on a free virtual training on perinatal mood disorders on March 7th.

Ms. Healy also shared an article that PSI had put out surrounding recent conversations about PMADs and postpartum psychosis, called "Postpartum Psychosis doesn't discriminate and neither should we."

Commissioner Mittal announced that MCPAP for Moms was giving a quarterly webinar on Feb. 28th at noon, along with Commissioner Kumar and Wendy Davis of PSI Central. The webinar will cover resources and how to link individuals with resources locally and nationally, virtual and in person.

Co-Chair Sen. Miranda put a link in the meeting chat to the birthing justice omnibus bill and reminded commissioners that it is a work in progress and their input is welcome.

Co-Chair Sen. Miranda thanked the commissioners for their service and stated her desire to make it a working commission. Commissioners can share resources

by sending to Ms. Healy. Commissioners can ask to do a forum in their part of the state. Commissioners have reached out to Co-Chair Sen. Miranda offline asking what they could do and what they could share, and we will be discussing this further. We also will discuss what will make the Commission be a worthwhile appointment for commissioners, and how we can make it stronger and make sure our time together is well-spent.

V. Adjournment