



**Ellen Story Commission on Postpartum Depression
Supplemental Meeting - December 14, 2022**

MEETING MINUTES

Commissioners Present: Co-Chair Rep. Jim O'Day; Jessie Colbert; Nneka Hall; Rebecca Butler; Beth Buxton; Margarita O'Neill-Arana; Addison Koelle on behalf of Amy Kershaw; Divya Kumar; Jayne Singer; Johanna Wakelin on behalf of Co-Chair Sen. Joan Lovely; Rashelle Centeio on behalf of Sen.-Elect Liz Miranda; Karen Garber

Commissioners Absent: Rep. Carole Fiola; Rep. Kim Ferguson; Rep. Mindy Domb; Sen. Bruce Tarr; Sen. Becca Rausch; Sen. Ann Gobi; Sen. John Keenan; Stephanie Crawford; Leena Mittal; Lauren Almeida; Sarah Krinsky; Kerry LaBounty; Lisa Scarfo; Lee Cohen; Julie Johnston; Josh Sparrow; Liz Murphy; Timoria Saba; Tiffany Moore Simas; Nadja Lopez Reilly

Others present: Jen Gilbert; Lucy Fisher; Adriana Jeane Louis

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. Commissioners introduced themselves and the seats they hold.

II. Report of the Special Legislative Commission on Racial Inequities in Maternal Health - Development of Action Items

Rashelle Centeio, incoming District Director for Commissioner Senator-Elect Liz Miranda, addressed the Commission. Ms. Centeio described the work performed by the Special Commission on Racial Inequities in Maternal Health and the many stories of hurt and racism that the RIMH Commission heard and considered during its tenure. Ms. Centeio thanked Commissioner Nneka Hall for highlighting some of the key recommendations from the RIMH Commission's report, particularly the recommendation for a birthing justice omnibus bill. Senator-Elect Miranda intends to

file such a bill in the upcoming session, which will closely resemble the federal Black Maternal Health Omnibus Act of 2021 and include many of the recommendations of the RIMH Commission's report as well as other previously-filed pieces of birth and reproductive justice legislation. Senator-Elect Miranda's office also has been holding listening sessions to get people's ideas about legislation that is needed.

Ms. Healy gave a presentation concerning action items for the PPD Commission to undertake in line with the recommendations of the RIMH Commission. With a new legislative session beginning, the PPD Commission has an opportunity to examine the policy initiatives being put forth and apply commissioners' expertise toward ensuring that suggested policies fully address perinatal mood and anxiety disorders, from prevention and screening to treatment, access, and more.

Ms. Healy stated that the PPD Commission will call for and endorse efforts to improve the perinatal experience given how increased support, resources, and choices for birthing people can positively impact mental health outcomes, and also how increasing support and resources can aid in identifying PMADs when they arise and helping people get the help they need. Examples of such efforts will include the Mother IS Supreme vision for postpartum care, expanding the number of birth centers, increasing access to community resources, expanding the birth worker workforce, and supporting related requests for legislative funding.

Ms. Healy stated that the PPD Commission will work to raise public and legislative awareness of issues that impact perinatal mental health. This includes explaining the connection that exists between mental health outcomes and adverse experiences such as pregnancy and infant loss, severe morbidity, traumatic birth, disrespectful care, and systemic racism, so that legislators can understand why policy that lessens the occurrence of these adverse events is so critical.

Ms. Healy further explained that the PPD Commission is supporting efforts to expand and diversify the perinatal behavioral health workforce, including by joining the Mind the Gap coalition, because the RIMH Commission found that having a diverse and culturally competent workforce optimizes the health of communities, especially those that have been historically marginalized, and recommended policy aimed at growing and diversifying the perinatal workforce to ensure culturally congruent maternity care and support.

Ms. Healy stated that the PPD Commission will contribute to the legislative process by having commissioners attend committee hearings on bills and provide written or oral testimony, by providing written letters of support to committees hearing bills, and by holding public-facing events to raise awareness, educate the community on the legislation, and empower constituents to participate in the process.

Finally, Ms. Healy provided a rough timeline for the PPD Commission's activities over the next 6 months, including the next quarterly meeting, a potential PPD Commission event to be held at the State House in March, and an event commemorating International Bereaved Mother's Day at the State House in May.

III. Adjournment