

The Ellen Story Commission on Postpartum Depression
Thursday, October 1st, 6pm – 7:30pm

Minutes

Attendance:

Commissioners present: Representative James O’Day (co-chair); Senator Joan Lovely (co-chair); Representative Mindy Domb; Representative Liz Miranda; Representative Kim Ferguson; Representative Carole Fiola; Senator Anne Gobi; Senator John Keenan; Timoria McQueen Saba; Margaret Hannah; Jessie Colbert; Nneka Hall; Karin Downs; Rebecca Butler; Lauren Almeida; Dr. Karen Crowley; Dr. Lee Cohen; Dr. Monica Le; Peggy Kaufman; Dr. Jayne Singer; Divya Kumar; Elizabeth Murphy, Esq.; Dr. Tiffany Moore-Simas; Kerry LaBounty; Anne Boffa; Dr. Lisa Scarfo; Samantha Aigner-Treworgy; Dr. Julie Johnston

Commissioners absent: Senator Bruce Tarr; Senator Diana DiZoglio; Dr. Michael Yogman; Dr. Joshua Sparrow; Liz Friedman

Commission staff present: Elizabeth Boyes, aide to Representative O’Day; Johanna Wakelin, Chief of Staff to Senator Lovely; Victoria Mori, Deputy Director of Constituent Services to Senator Tarr; Gail DeRiggi, aide to Commissioner Samantha Aigner-Treworgy; Calee Merenda, aide to Senator DiZoglio; Tyler Cotta, aide to Representative Fiola; Katie O’Leary, aide to Representative Domb; Liz Gibson, MassHealth

Non-Commissioners present: Representative Kate Lipper-Garabedian; Heather Strother, representing the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health; Beth Buxton, representing the Massachusetts Department of Public Health; Dr. John Straus, MCPAP for Moms; Dr. Leena Mittal, MCPAP for Moms; Nancy Byatt, MCPAP for Moms; Jamie Belsito, Maternal Mental Health Leadership Alliance and Effie’s Grace, LLC; Monica Vohra; Commonwealth Medicine

Members of the public and other state employees were also present.

1. Welcome

Representative O'Day, Senator Lovely, and Elizabeth Boyes welcomed Commission members and guests. Representative O'Day approved the minutes from the Commission's March 4th 2020 meeting. Elizabeth Boyes welcomed our newest Commissioner:

- Lauren Almeida, Massachusetts Department of Children and Families (DCF)
 - Lauren is the Director of Mental Health at DCF and is a licensed clinical social worker

Elizabeth Boyes notified the Commission of six vacant Commissioner seats:

- Two vacant Senate seats, one vacant Massachusetts Midwives Association & Massachusetts Affiliate of the American College of Nurse Midwives seat, one vacant Massachusetts Advanced Practice Psychiatric Nurses seat, one vacant representative of a commercial insurer seat, and one vacant Pediatrician from the Massachusetts Medical Society seat.

During the discussion on vacant Commissioner seat, Margaret Hannah discussed the need for improved representation on the Commission that reflects the diversity of Massachusetts and brings to the table members of communities that are disproportionately affected by postpartum depression. Margaret discussed that current Commissioners should consider if the Commission would be better served by stepping down and letting a new voice join the Commission. The discussion will resume at a later date to allow for a more detailed discussion on this matter.

2. Three new sub-committees

Elizabeth Boyes introduced three new sub-committees to the Commission:

- Legislative and Policy Sub-Committee that will support the Commission with policy planning and advocacy.
- Communications and Planning Sub-Committee that will support the Commission by drafting responses to PPD-related news and planning events.

Questions? Contact Elizabeth.Boyes@mahouse.gov

- Research and Action Sub-Committee that will support the Commission by translating relevant research or other information from stakeholders into actionable steps the Commission can take.

These sub-committees will meet once between quarterly meetings to allow for Commissioners to work together in smaller groups on activities that will support the Commission's overall goals.

3. Legislative Update

Elizabeth Boyes provided an update on several maternal health bills:

- H1948/S1332 "An Act relative to out-of-hospital access and safety"
 - Status: Senate passed and referred to committee on House Ways and Means
- H910/S588 "An Act relative to mental health parity implementation"
 - Status: in the committee on House Ways and Means
- S2274 "An Act relative to the well-being of new mothers and infants"
 - Status: accompanied study order S2496 and discharged to committee on Senate Rules
- S2864 "Resolve establishing a special commission for improving access to treatment for individuals with perinatal substance use disorder"
 - Status: Senate passed and referred to the committee on House Ways and Means
- H4818 "An Act relative to reduce racial inequities in maternal health"
 - Status: uncertain, will provide updates to the Commission as needed
- H1182 "An Act relative to Medicaid coverage for doula services"
 - Status: accompanied a new draft H4780, referred to the committee on House Ways and Means
- H1879 "An Act relative to postpartum depression screening"
 - Status: in the committee on House Ways and Means

- Jamie Belsito brought to the Commission’s attention H107 “An Act establishing a diaper benefits pilot program”. H107 is currently in the committee on House Ways and Means.

Beth Buxton, LSCW, Director of Maternal Health Initiatives at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) presented an update on DPH’s perinatal mental health data analysis plan.

4. Massachusetts COVID-19 Maternal Equity Coalition

The Massachusetts COVID-19 Maternal Equity Coalition will provide the Commission with an update via PowerPoint slides at a later date.

5. Announcements from Commissioners and Attendees

- The Commission will host a town hall meeting in November to allow for members of the public to share their experiences with PPD. Elizabeth Boyes will send out more details at a later date. Commissioners are encouraged to share their ideas with Elizabeth on this event. She can be reached at Elizabeth.Boyes@mahouse.gov.
- Commissioner Nneka Hall:
 - Shared her new program, Mama’s Kitchen, with the Commission. Mama’s Kitchen is a program designed to support the birth and postpartum population found in the immediate community surrounding each black church that agrees to take part. The first church participating in Mama’s Kitchen is the Historic Charles St. AME Church. Mama’s Kitchen held a virtual launch event on September 2nd 2020, hosted by the Historic Charles St. AME Church and Quietly United In Loss Together (QUILT), another organization founded by Commissioner Nneka Hall. Individuals interested in volunteering their time or services can contact Commissioner Nneka Hall at nnekajhall@gmail.com.

- Commissioner Nneka Hall is hosting a virtual event on November 12th 2020 with Streetwyze, a neighborhood navigation app powered by the local community. The virtual event invite will be shared at a later date.
- Elizabeth Boyes notified the Commission that October is Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness month.
 - Elizabeth Boyes and Commissioner Nneka Hall are planning a virtual event to remember and honor the pregnancies and infants lost to stillbirth and miscarriage. The virtual event will be held in October with more details to follow.
- Commissioner Jayne Singer:
 - Irving Harris Diversity-Informed Tenets for Work with Infants, Children & Families as a tool the Commission can consider to strengthen the commitment to diversity, inclusion and equity principles in the Commission's work.
- Commissioner Jessie Colbert, Executive Director and founder of the Mass. PPD Fund:
 - Announced the Mass. PPD Fund has a new scholarship program for the MGH Center for Women's Health online training on *Psychiatric Disorders in Women: Diagnostic and Treatment Considerations Across the Female Lifespan*. The Mass. PPD Fund has 10 available scholarship spots.
 - The Mass. PPD Fund is expanding GPS Group Peer Support *COVID-19 Perinatal Emergency Support Program* training. This training is available for free and uses GPS's evidence-based, trauma-informed flexible model.
 - Individuals interested in applying to Mass. PPD Fund's scholarship opportunity or attending the GPS training, please reach out to Commissioner Jessie Colbert at jcolbert@massppdfund.org.
- The Ellen Story Commission on Postpartum Depression will host its next quarterly meeting in January.

6. Adjournment