



Commonwealth of Massachusetts General Court

The Ellen Story Commission on Postpartum Depression

2021 Annual Report

Report Submitted on June 30th 2021

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Depression

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Special Legislative Commission on Postpartum Depression
2021 Annual Report

June 30, 2021

His Excellency, Charlie Baker
Governor of the Commonwealth
State House, Room 360
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Senator Karen E. Spilka
President of the Senate
State House, Room 332
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Representative Ronald Mariano
Speaker of the House
State House, Room 356
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Governor Baker, President Spilka, and Speaker Mariano:

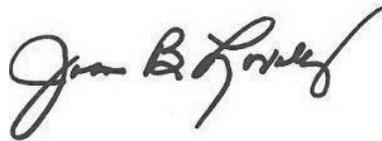
On behalf of the Ellen Story Commission on Postpartum Depression, and in accordance with Chapter 313 of the Acts of 2010, we present you with the Commission's annual report. This year, the Commission met a total of seven times, held its sixth annual awareness day, and endorsed two bills.

The Commission has continued to make excellent progress over the last year on the issue of perinatal mental health, which would not have been possible without your support. The Department of Public Health (DPH) has continued to be an invaluable partner. MCPAP for Moms and the PPD Pilot Programs continue to support many birthing parents and families across the Commonwealth.

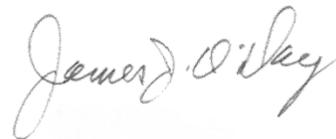
We are deeply grateful for your continued support for MassHealth's reimbursement policy to cover the cost of PPD screening across the Commonwealth. The routine screening and referral mechanisms we have established in the perinatal and postpartum period across the Commonwealth are making an essential impact on the well-being of women and families, but we know there is more work to be done. Rates of reported screening show that there are women with PPD who are not being identified, and there are significant racial and ethnic inequities issues within both screening and incidence rates. The current disparities in outcomes and access to resources for pregnant and postpartum women of color in particular presents another urgent and under-resourced need that the Commission has worked diligently over the past year to address. We continue to work on this matter to achieve equitable health outcomes for parents of color.

Thank you again for your support. We hope you find this report informative.

Sincerely,



Joan B. Lovely
State Senator
2nd Essex District



James O'Day
State Representative
14th Worcester District

Enabling Statute of the Commission

The Acts of 2010

Chapter 313. AN ACT RELATIVE TO POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same as follows:

The department of public health may consult with health care providers, including, but not limited to, obstetricians, gynecologists, pediatricians and primary care providers, nonprofits and health insurance carriers regarding postpartum depression to develop a culture of awareness, de-stigmatization and screening for perinatal depression so that residents of the commonwealth may be assured of the most effective and affordable provision of public health services possible. The department shall develop standards for measuring effective screening for postpartum depression using recognized clinical standards and best practices and shall make recommendations for health plan and health care provider data reporting. The department shall issue regulations that require providers and carriers to annually submit data on screening for postpartum depression. Following the receipt of the data, the commissioner of public health shall issue an annual summary of the activities related to screening for postpartum depression, including best practices and effective screening tools. The department shall annually file the summary with the commissioner of public health and the clerks of the house of representatives and the senate not later than June 30; provided, however, that the first report is due not later than June 30, 2011.

There is hereby established a special legislative commission, pursuant to section 2A of chapter 4 of the General Laws, to be known as the Ellen Story commission on postpartum depression, to consist of 5 members of the senate, 1 of whom shall be a member of the minority party appointed by the minority leader, 1 of whom shall serve as co-chair, 5 members of the house of representatives, 1 of whom shall be a member of the minority party appointed by the minority leader, 1 of whom shall serve as co-chair, the commissioner of the department of public health, the commissioner of the department of mental health, the commissioner of insurance, the commissioner of the department of children and families, the commissioner of early education and care, and the director of Medicaid, or their designees, all of whom shall serve as ex officio members, and 18 persons to be appointed by the governor, 1 of whom shall be a representative of the Massachusetts chapter of the National Association of Social Workers, 1 of whom shall be appointed jointly by the Massachusetts Midwives Association and the Massachusetts Affiliate of the American College of Nurse Midwives who shall be a midwife licensed to practice in the commonwealth, 1 of whom shall be a representative from the Nurses United for Responsible Services who shall be an advanced practice psychiatric nurse, 1 of whom shall be a representative from the Massachusetts Coalition of Nurse Practitioners who shall be a nurse practitioner, 1 of whom shall be a representative of the Massachusetts Psychological Association who shall be a psychologist, 1 of whom shall be a representative from the children's behavioral health advisory council established in section 16Q of chapter 6A of the General Laws, 1 of whom shall be a representative from the Massachusetts Behavioral Health Partnership or a managed care organization or managed care entity contracting with MassHealth, 5 of whom shall be representatives of the Massachusetts Medical Society appointed in consultation with their relevant specialty chapters, including a pediatrician, an obstetrician, a family physician, a psychiatrist and a child and adolescent psychiatrist, 1 of whom shall be a woman who has experienced postpartum depression, 1 of whom shall be a representative from a regionally-based nonprofit group currently serving women suffering from postpartum depression, 1 of whom shall be a representative from the Massachusetts Association of Health Plans and 3 of whom shall be representatives from commercial health insurance carriers or managed care organizations doing business in the commonwealth, is hereby established for the purpose of making an investigation and study relative to postpartum depression, including, but not limited to: (i) an assessment of current research on the subject and whether there exist evidence-based, best or promising practices on the prevention, detection or treatment of postpartum depression; (ii) a review of current policies and practices with respect to screenings for postpartum depression, including the frequency and location of screenings and training personnel

administering the screenings, the availability of reimbursement and issues relative to medical necessity and third-party coverage; (iii) provision of assistance to the department of public health, other state agencies and organizations in the development of professional and public educational materials and programs on postpartum depression, in the development of referral lists for postpartum depression treatment, building on existing resources and in the designation of authorized validated screening tools; (iv) provision of assistance to the department of public health, other state agencies and organizations relative to applications for federal funding to support efforts consistent with the mission and purpose of the commission; and (v) any other matters that the commission considers relevant to the fulfillment of its mission and purpose. The co-chairs of the commission may each appoint up to 3 additional commission members to fulfill the purpose of the commission.

Said commission shall provide guidance and advice to the governor, the general court and the secretary of health and human services relative to current research on postpartum depression including, but not limited to, best and promising practices in the prevention, detection and treatment of postpartum depression and recommend policies, including legislation, to promote greater public awareness, screening and treatment of postpartum depression. The special commission may conduct public hearings, forums or meetings to gather information and to raise awareness of postpartum depression, including the sponsorship of or participation in statewide or regional conferences.

Said commission shall file an annual report at the end of each state fiscal year with the governor and the clerks of the house of representatives and the senate, who shall forward the same to the joint committee on public health and the joint committee on financial services, along with recommendations, if any, together with drafts of legislation necessary to carry those recommendations into effect. The special commission may file such interim reports and recommendations as it considers appropriate.

Approved, August 19, 2010; Amended November 2, 2015 and December 19, 2016

List of Commission Members

Sen. Joan Lovely, Co-Chair

Rep. James O'Day, Co-Chair

Gail DeRiggi, Department of Early Education and Care, Designee

Lauren Almeida, Department of Children and Families, Designee

Rebecca Butler, Commissioner of Insurance, Designee

Dr. Lee Cohen, Psychiatrist, Massachusetts Medical Society

Jessie Colbert, Representative Co-Chair Appointment

Karen Crowley, Massachusetts Coalition of Nurse Practitioners

Sen. Becca Rausch, Senate Member

Rep. Mindy Domb, House Member

Karin Downs, Department of Public Health, Designee

Rep. Kimberly N. Ferguson, House Member

Rep. Carole Fiola, House Member

Sen. Anne Gobi, Senate Member

Jill Fieleke, Massachusetts Association of Advanced Practice Psychiatric Nurses

Nneka Hall, Senate Co-Chair Appointment

Margaret Hannah, House Co-Chair Appointment

Margarita O'Neill-Arana, Department of Mental Health, Designee

Dr. Julie Johnston, Family Physician, Massachusetts Medical Society

Peggy Kaufman, National Association of Social Workers

Divya Kumar, A woman with lived experience

Kerry LaBounty, Health New England, Commercial health insurance representative

Margot Tracy, Director of Medicaid, Designee

Timoria McQueen Saba, House Co-Chair Appointment

Rep. Liz Miranda, House Member

Dr. Tiffany A. Moore Simas, Obstetrician, Massachusetts Medical Society

Elizabeth (Fluet) Murphy, Esq., Massachusetts Association of Health Plans

Dr. Lisa Scarfo, AllWays Health Partners, managed care organization representative

Dr. Jayne Singer, Massachusetts Psychological Association

Dr. Joshua Sparrow, Child Psychiatrist, Massachusetts Medical Society

Sen. Bruce Tarr, Senate Member

Dr. Michael Yogman, Children's Behavioral Health Advisory

Summary of Meetings and Events

Meeting 30 – October 1, 2020

At this meeting, the Commission welcomed a new commissioner; Lauren Almeida, Director of Mental Health at the Department of Children and Families and the designee for the Department of Children and Families seat on the Commission. The Commission has six vacant seats, which need to be filled. The new coordinator, Elizabeth Boyes, was also introduced.

Elizabeth introduced three new sub-committees; Legislative and Policy sub-committee, Communications and Planning sub-committee, and Research and Action sub-committee. Commissioners were asked to email Elizabeth with their preference of sub-committee assignment.

Elizabeth provided an update on several maternal health bills that the Commission has previously been informed of. Beth Buxton from the Department of Public Health presented an update on DPH's perinatal mental health data analysis plan. A primary need for the plan is funding to take action on the plan.

Several announcements regarding perinatal events and programs were made at this meeting. Elizabeth announced that the Commission will host a town hall meeting in November to allow for members of the public to share their experiences with PPD. Commissioners were encouraged to participate in planning this event. The Commission and Commissioner Nneka Hall's organization, Quietly United In Loss Together, is hosting a virtual event later in October to remember and honor pregnancy and infant loss. Commissioner Nneka Hall shared her new program, Mama's Kitchen, which is designed to support the birth and postpartum population found in the immediate community surround every black church that agrees to take part. Commissioner Jessie Colbert, executive director of the Mass PPD Fund, announced a scholarship opportunity for the MGH Center for Women's Health online training on *Psychiatric Disorders in Women: Diagnostic and Treatment Considerations Across the Female Lifespan*.

Meeting 31 – October 22, 2020

This supplemental meeting was held to address Commission operations. The topics discussed include; whether to create term limits, how to find and recruit new

Commissioners, improving representation that reflects the diversity of Massachusetts, Commissioner engagement, and filing vacant seats. Additional topics that came up include defining the role of Commissioners.

Meeting 32 – December 16, 2020

This supplemental meeting was held to address the role of Commissioners and filing vacant seats.

Meeting 33 – January 28, 2021

At this meeting, the Commission welcomed two new Commissioners; Margarita O’Neill-Arana.

Elizabeth Boyes announced that the annual awareness day will be held virtually in May. Commissioners and members of the public were encouraged to assist with planning the event. Commissioner Leena Mittal provided an update on MCPAP for Moms. MCPAP for Moms has seen an increase in calls, a greater need for complex referrals, and has overall been busier as a result of the pandemic. MCPAP for Moms and PSI of MA will be submitting a proposal for funding their collaboration to improve access to perinatal mental health services.

Buffy Sheff Ross, MSW, LICSW, and Michael Jellinek, MD, from Newton-Wellesley Hospital presented on the hospital’s PMAD initiative. The hospital launched a PMAD initiative in April 2019. Through this initiative, patients are referred to Buffy and she connects them with other providers and resources. Referrals have increased every month in 2020 compared to months last year in 2019. The future plans include expanding the initiative to other Mass General Brigham Hospitals and to start QI project with MGH to understand how mothers with PPD navigate care.

Susan Feingold, Psy.D, PMH-C, presented on postpartum psychosis legislation that she helped pass in Illinois. She provided the Commission with background on postpartum psychosis, the reason behind this legislation, and spoke on her experiences getting the legislation passed in Illinois. In Massachusetts, *An Act relative to the well-being of new mothers and infants*, will be refiled again this legislative session.

Commissioner Nneka Hall presented on Mother IS Supreme Postpartum Care Center. The mission of Commissioner Hall’s postpartum care center, Mother Is Supreme, is to support birthing parents and teach them how to care for themselves and their infants. A postpartum care center provides emotional and practical support to relieve the mental and physical load of the birthing person. Commissioner Hall needs from the Commission the following; legislation surrounding insurance coverage for extensive postpartum care and

postpartum leave, funding for the postpartum care center and app, and connecting with others who can support this initiative.

Elizabeth brought up legislation on implicit bias training for health care providers. This idea was previously scheduled to be discussed in early 2020, however, the pandemic derailed the conversation. Commissioners were asked about their interest in drafting legislation on this topic. The general consensus was that implicit bias training does not address systemic racism in the health care system and it is systemic racism that the Commission should focus on to create the biggest impact.

Dr. Monica Le is stepping down from the Commission. She represented MassHealth on the Commission since 2011 and was instrumental in securing MassHealth reimbursement for PPD screenings. The Commission is thankful for her work and insight that she has contributed to the Commission.

Meeting 34 – April 6, 2021

At this meeting, the Commission welcomed one new Commissioner; Senator Becca Rausch.

The Commission's sixth annual awareness day will be held virtually on May 5th, world maternal mental health day, from 9am to 11am. The theme of the event is COVID-19: Changing the Perinatal Experience. Please see Appendix I of this report for the program of the event and summary of the speaking series.

The Commission discussed the role of Commissioners and purpose of the Commission, which is stated in Chapter 313 of the Acts of 2010. Roles of Commissioners include attending quarterly meetings, providing direction on the activities of the Commission, participate in planning events, and other activities as needed. Commissioners asked for clarification on the following; group norms, engaging with presenters, follow-up steps after a presentation, and taking more time to define each Commissioner role. Commissioners did not want to recommit to sub-committees and asked for additional Commission-wide meetings instead. The discussion concluded with Commissioners wanting to hold an additional meeting to further discuss these topics.

Commissioner Leena Mittal asked for advocacy support on the MCPAP for Moms and PSI of MA expansion budget proposal.

Meeting 35 – April 27, 2021

At this meeting, Commissioner Nneka Hall presented on Mother IS Supreme Postpartum Care Center. Postpartum care centers surround care for the entire birthing family by adapting traditional postpartum practices to preserve our birthing people. Commissioner Hall shared updates on her initiative and ways for Commissioners to engage.

Meeting 36 – May 12, 2021

At this legislative briefing, Bay State Birth Coalition briefed the Commission on the out-of-hospital birth access and safety bill. The Bay State Birth Coalition asked for the PPD Commission’s endorsement of the bill and shared additional details on the bill.

Perinatal Mental Health Awareness Day – May 5, 2021

The sixth annual Perinatal Mental Health Awareness Day was held virtually. The event focused on COVID-19 and how it has changed the perinatal experience. Co-chairs Senator Joan Lovely and Representative O’Day offered opening remarks. Please see Appendix I of this report for the program of the event and summary of the speaking series.

Future Goals

In the coming year, the Commission will continue to work on multiple projects promoting better screening, treatment, and awareness of prenatal and postpartum mental health of mothers and fathers, as well as the dissemination of lessons learned from PPD initiatives in the Commonwealth. The Commission will work to address the disparities parents of color face when trying to access treatment and support for perinatal mental health care. The Commission will also identify and determine ways to address the cultural and geographic inequities in perinatal mental health care. This information will be shared locally and nationally through the Commission's website; ppdcommission.com, twitter account; twitter.com/ppdcommission, and facebook; facebook.com/ppdcommission. The Commission will continue to assist MCPAP for Moms and the PPD Community Health Center pilot programs through continued advocacy and legislative support. Finally, the Commission will pursue other goals as determined by the Commission.

Appendix I: 2019 Perinatal Mental Health Awareness Day Program



**The Ellen Story Commission on
Postpartum Depression**

Invites you to the 6th Annual

**PERINATAL
MENTAL HEALTH
AWARENESS
DAY:**

***COVID-19: Changing the Perinatal
Experience***

Wednesday, May 5, 9-11 AM
Virtual

Questions? Contact
Elizabeth.Boyes@mahouse.gov

LEGISLATIVE BRIEFING

MCPAP for Moms and PSI of MA Collaboration

Budget Ask

Presenters: Tiffany York of PSI of MA, Dr. Leena Mittal

In partnering with MCPAP for Moms, PSI can strengthen the safety net for pregnant and postpartum families throughout the state. Collaboration of PSI-MA's compassionate and knowledgeable community support model with MCPAP for Moms state-wide services, including the Interface database, can help to close the gap in the care and referral system for families throughout Massachusetts, particularly for Black and Brown families as well as those in care deserts.

LEGISLATIVE BRIEFING

H.2371/S.1474

An Act relative to conducting fetal and infant mortality review

Sponsors: Representative Liz Miranda, Representative Brandy Fluker Oakley, Senator Joan Lovely

Fetal-infant mortality review (FIMR) provides a way of identifying disparities in infant mortality across communities. FIMR provides communities with information about the effects of health care changes on mothers, infants, and families. The purpose of the FIMR process is to identify system gaps and better understand the root causes leading to infant and fetal health inequities.

H.2372/S.1475

An Act relative to Medicaid coverage for doula services

Sponsors: Representative Liz Miranda, Representative Lindsay Sabadosa, Senator Joan Lovely

This bill will provide Medicaid coverage for doula services throughout Massachusetts for pregnant persons, surrogates, foster parents and adoptive parents. This will make doula care more accessible, furthering the goals of racial equity, reproductive and birthing justice.

SPEAKERS

Cindy H. Liu, PhD

Director of Developmental Risk and Cultural Resilience Program, Brigham and Women's Hospital
Assistant Professor, Harvard Medical School

Dr. Liu is a clinical and developmental psychologist whose research work focuses on perinatal stress and mental health, and its implications for the family across diverse populations. She is the PI of the ongoing PEACE study, a longitudinal study that follows perinatal women during the pandemic.

Carmina Erdei, MD

Attending Neonatologist, Brigham and Women's Hospital
Instructor, Harvard Medical School

Dr. Carmina Erdei, MD holds triple board certification in Pediatrics, Neonatal-Perinatal Medicine, and Developmental-Behavioral Pediatrics. She is a faculty member in the Department of Pediatric Newborn Medicine at Brigham and Women's Hospital, and the medical director of the Growth and Development Unit, a subunit of the BWH NICU. Her research focuses on improving outcomes of high-risk infants and families outcomes through optimization of family-centered developmental care.

SPEAKERS

Leena Mittal, MD, FACLP

Director, Division of Women's Mental Health
Department of Psychiatry
Brigham and Women's Hospital
Instructor of Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School
Associate Medical Director, MCPAP for Moms

Leena Mittal is the Chief of the Division of Women's Mental Health at Brigham and Women's Hospital and an Instructor in Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, serves as the Program Director for the Women's Mental Health Fellowship at the Brigham and is also the Associate Medical Director for the Massachusetts Child Psychiatry Access Program for Moms (MCPAP for Moms). Dr Mittal is a perinatal psychiatrist, board certified in adult psychiatry, psychosomatic medicine and addiction medicine, with a focus on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and antiracism work. She has numerous publications and speaks nationally on the treatment of mental health and substance use conditions throughout pregnancy and the postpartum period.

SPEAKERS

Morgan Ashley Taylor, MPA

Mother and Black Maternal Health Advocate

Morgan is the mother of two daughters, a 6 year old and 6 months old, who she birthed during the covid-19 pandemic. Becoming a mother solidified Morgan's passion for helping ensure Black mothers have the supports they need for autonomous and joyful pregnancy and parenting experiences. Morgan is also a community-centered-trained birthworker, and the Assistant Director of the Boston Healthy Start Initiative.

SPEAKERS

Caroline Flowers Tomekowou, LMHC, PMHC

Caroline Flowers Tomekowou is a Licensed Mental Health Clinician in Worcester. She has a certification in Perinatal Mental Health and serves on the Board of Directors for PSI MA. She is an outpatient Psychotherapist in Worcester and has a long history of Emergency Mental Health in the community.

Sharon Dekel, PhD, MS, MPhil

Assistant Professor in Psychology, Psychiatry Department, Harvard Medical School
Director, Dekel Laboratory, Psychiatry Department, Massachusetts General Hospital

Dr. Sharon Dekel is a faculty member of Harvard Medical School and a licensed clinical psychologist. Her laboratory at the Massachusetts General Hospital is devoted to the study of the psychological and biological mechanisms implicated in maternal adaption following childbirth-related trauma and her research has been supported by NIH. Currently, Dr. Dekel serves as the PI of the Mothers Wellness study that assess maternal adaption in the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

EVENT PROGRAM

Introduction - 9am to 9:10am

Representative James J. O'Day and Senator Joan B. Lovely

Presentations - 9:10am to 10:30am

1. PEACE Study: Cindy Liu, PhD; Carmina Erdei, MD; Leena Mittal, MD, FACLP
2. Caroline Flowers Tomekowou, LMHC, PMHC
3. Sharon Dekel, PhD, MS, MPhil
4. Morgan Ashley Taylor, MPA

Legislative Briefing - 10:30am to 10:58am

1. Remarks from Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito
2. An Act relative to conducting fetal and infant mortality review (H.2371/S.1474)
3. An Act relative to Medicaid coverage for doula services (H.2372/S.1475)
4. MCPAP PSI expansion

Closing Remarks - 10:58am to 11am