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ASSOCIATION  
FOR BEHAVIORAL  
HEALTHCARE

July 13, 2017

Governor Charles Baker  
State House, Room 360  
Boston, MA 02133

*Re: FY 2018 Conference Committee Budget*

Dear Governor Baker:

The Association for Behavioral Healthcare (ABH) deeply appreciates your strong commitment to improving access to mental health and addiction treatment and services. We ask that you consider the following requests while reviewing the FY18 conference committee budget.

As you know, ABH is a statewide association representing more than eighty community-based mental health and addiction treatment provider organizations. Our members are the primary providers of publicly-funded behavioral healthcare services in the Commonwealth, serving approximately 81,000 Massachusetts residents daily, 1.5 million residents annually, and employing over 46,500 people.

### **Earmarks**

**We strongly urge you to veto all organizational earmarks included in the Department of Mental Health and Bureau of Substance Abuse Services line items that do not align with the Commonwealth's strategic plan.** This funding would be better spent to preserve programs established through the fair and open bidding process that state agencies oversee. Individual, organizational earmarking is an unfair process that allows providers to receive state funding without requiring them to compete through a public bidding process.

Additionally, the proliferation of earmarks takes critical public mental health and addiction treatment funding away from the strategic, measured investments state agencies make in new and existing services and earmarks prevent the Commonwealth from maintaining programs that have been developed through the public bidding process.

### **Department of Mental Health**

ABH requests your approval of the funding levels recommended by the conference committee for the Department of Mental Health. We look forward to working with the administration to ensure this funding level will preserve all existing services at DMH, including the new community placements funded by the Legislature in the last few fiscal years.

### **Bureau of Substance Abuse Services**

ABH requests your approval of the funding levels recommended by the conference committee for the Bureau of Substance Abuse Services, as well as the outside language included in the report renaming the Bureau as the Bureau of Substance **Addiction** Services.

In particular, ABH strongly supports the new funding directives including \$250,000 for the Massachusetts Access to Recovery (MA-ATR) program, \$250,000 to purchased Narcan for distribution to addiction treatment providers, and \$250,000 for addiction recovery centers.

### **MassHealth**

ABH urges you to continue to preserve funding for existing behavioral health services for MassHealth members.

### **Chapter 257 Rate Reserve (1599-6903)**

ABH thanks you for your continued support of the Chapter 257 rate reserve. We urge you to approve this funding, while striking the language requiring contracts between EOHHS and providers to include detailed employee salary data.

As always, I am available (vdigravio@abhmass.org or 508-647-8385 x 11) to discuss this request should you or your staff have any questions about these matters.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Vicker V. DiGravio III  
President/CEO

CC: Secretary Marylou Sudders, Executive Office of Health and Human Services  
Assistant Secretary Dan Tsai, MassHealth  
Commissioner Monica Bharel, Department of Public Health  
Commissioner Joan Mikula, Department of Mental Health