



ASSOCIATION
FOR BEHAVIORAL
HEALTHCARE

June 3, 2013

Governor Deval Patrick
Office of the Governor
State House – Room 280
Boston, MA 02133

Re: Restore 9C Cuts to the FY2013 Mental Health Budget

Dear Governor Patrick:

On behalf of the members of the Association for Behavioral Healthcare, I am writing to urge you to restore Fiscal Year 2013 9C cuts made to the Department of Mental Health line items (**5011-0100, 5042-5000, 5046-0000, 5047-0001, 5095-0015**) in December of 2012.

ABH is a statewide association representing over 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 and over three-quarters of a million residents annually while employing 37,500 people.

As you know, through April, fiscal 2013 tax collections are running more than \$500 million above benchmarks, and the administration already took action to restore approximately \$21 million in spending, primarily in local aid accounts. Restoring funding for services to the Department of Mental Health (DMH) is critically necessary and fiscally responsible.

ABH and our member providers are concerned that the community behavioral healthcare system is struggling and the \$7.5 million in 9C cuts made to DMH affect the safety net of current services. The Department of Mental Health has been able to temporarily fill some of these budget gaps, but the annualization of these reductions has put tremendous stress on their budget moving into fiscal year 2014. Although House 1 purportedly allowed DMH to maintain existing programming, ABH is concerned that the funding in the original proposal did not go far enough. House and Senate budget writers then used these assumptions when formulating their spending plans for 2014. Restoring the funding for fiscal year 2013 would help to alleviate some of these budget pressures.

The community-based behavioral healthcare system is not currently able to serve thousands of individuals and families who need access services and supports. Funding for services must be increased to ensure that individuals are able to access needed care and to provide stability for the community behavioral health system to the greatest extent possible. The continued struggle of individuals with behavioral health conditions being stuck in hospital emergency rooms is directly related to the lack of available community supports.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. We look forward to continue to work with you to support a robust and adequate community-based behavioral health system that supports individuals with serious mental illness in the most appropriate and least restrictive setting.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vicker V. DiGravio III". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

Vicker V. DiGravio
President/CEO