



May 30, 2013

Representative Brian Dempsey, Chair
House Committee on Ways and Means
State House, Room 243
Boston, MA 02133

Representative Stephen Kulik, Vice Chair
House Committee on Ways and Means
State House, Room 238
Boston, MA 02133

Representative Viriato deMacedo, Ranking Member
House Committee on Ways and Means
State House, Room 124
Boston, MA 02133

Re: FY 2014 Budget

Dear Chairman Dempsey, Vice Chair Kulik & Representative deMacedo:

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.

While we are encouraged by the Legislature's recognition of the importance of community-based mental health and substance use disorder services, we continue to be concerned that the community behavioral healthcare system is struggling. Thousands of individuals and families are unable to 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.

The Commonwealth must commit the financial resources necessary to ensure adults and children with mental illness and/or substance use disorders have the ability to live successfully in their own communities. Investing in the community system is vital if Massachusetts is able to achieve its goals of better quality care at lower costs. Towards that end, ABH and our members request your support of the following during FY 2014 conference committee deliberations:

DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH (DMH):

Please support the **Senate** appropriation for the following DMH line items:

5042-5000: Child & Adolescent Community Services. The Senate funded this line item at \$85,222,740 which is approximately \$600,000 more than the House appropriation.

5046-0000: Adult Community Services. The Senate funded this line item at \$353,921,665 which is approximately \$5 million over the House funding level.

5047-0001: Emergency Services. The Senate funded this line item at \$36,142,254 which is approximately \$1.2 million above the House funding level. This increase in funding would support vital services proposed by Governor Patrick in the aftermath of the Newtown tragedy. Mobile Crisis teams travel to locations with individuals in crisis and provide specialized mental health services from specially-trained responders. The increase to the personnel and technology budget will improve and expand the Commonwealth's Mobile Crisis outreach capacity, while enhancing staff safety and response times.

Please support the **House** appropriation for the following DMH line item:

5011-0100. DMH Operations Account. The House funded this line item at \$27,532,107 which is approximately \$260,000 higher than the Senate appropriation.

BUREAU OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICES (BSAS):

Please support the **Senate** appropriation and budget language for the Bureau of Substance Abuse Services (**line items 4512-0200, 4512-0201, 4512-0202, 4512-0203**).

Please support the **Senate** Outside Section language (**Section 98 in Senate Ways and Means budget**) which extends the Substance Abuse Services Fund until the end of Fiscal Year 2014.

These funding levels and extension of the Substance Abuse Services Fund are necessary to ensure that the state is able to maintain the current level of services for individuals living with substance use disorders.

HUMAN SERVICES SALARY RESERVE:

Please support the **Senate** appropriation and outside section language to appropriate \$11.5 million in one-time funding for a Fiscal Year 2014 Salary Reserve.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Vicker V. DiGravio III
President/CEO