



ABH February Committee Meetings

Tuesday, February 2
ATS/CSS, 10 a.m.

Wednesday, February 3
eHealth, 10 a.m.

Friday, February 5
Children's CEO, 10 a.m.

Monday, February 8
Billing, 10 a.m.

Wednesday, February 10
Outpatient, 10 a.m.

Thursday, February 11
SOAP, 10 a.m.

Friday, February 12
Corporate Compliance,
10 a.m.

Tuesday, February 16
OTP, 9:30 a.m.

Thursday, February 18
BH CP Exec, 10 a.m.
COE/RRS, 1 p.m.

Tuesday, February 23
PWUP, 12 p.m.

ABH Welcomes Abigail Kim as Director of Public Policy and Strategic Initiatives

ABH is pleased to announce that **Abigail Kim**, Legislative Director to Senator John Keenan, has joined ABH as our **Director of Public Policy and Strategic Initiatives**.

For more than four years, Ms. Kim has worked in the government and health sectors, focusing on issues relating to addiction and mental health, managing policy needs, tracking legislation, researching, and collaborating with internal and external stakeholders.

From 2018 to 2020, Ms. Kim helped shape and pass Senator Keenan's public health legislation banning all flavored tobacco products in Massachusetts, which was signed into law only 10 months after drafting and remains a national model today. She also worked as the lead staffer on matters relating to Sen. Keenan's Chairmanship on the Post Audit and Oversight Committee, and oversaw their role in the budget process.

This experience aligns directly with her new role as Director of Public Policy and Strategic Initiatives, as Ms. Kim will help design and implement ABH's public policy agenda and strategic initiatives. Ms. Kim will help ABH intensify its focus on insurance coverage and payment policies for mental health and addiction treatment services as a critical component in expanding access to care.

During her undergrad at Northeastern University, Ms. Kim conducted research into individuals with schizophrenia, children suffering from PTSD as a result of burn injuries, and literacy levels among individuals with mental illness. While pursuing her Master's degree in Public Health at Boston University, she worked with individuals with alcohol use disorders, which led to her concentrating her degree in Health Policy and Law.

Ms. Kim was recognized for her work in 2020 with the Mitch Snyder Award and following her policy work with grassroots addiction advocacy organizations in 2018, she earned the Excellence in Practice Award from Boston University's Activist Lab.

Ms. Kim began her career as a research assistant at Boston University School of Public Health. She is a graduate of Northeastern University with a Master's in Public Health from Boston University School of Public Health.

We are thrilled to have Abby join us and hope you will join us in welcoming her to the tremendous ABH team! She can be reached at akim@abhmass.org.

ABH COVID-19 Landing Page

ABH has created a COVID-19 resource page where we are collecting the guidance most relevant to ABH members:

<https://www.abhmass.org/newsroom/announcements/guidance-on-covid-19.html>

Governor Signs BH Telehealth Rate Parity Permanency

House and Senate conferees recently released compromise language for a comprehensive healthcare package, *S.2984 – An Act promoting a resilient health care system that puts patients first*. The legislation was then enacted by both the House and Senate and signed by the Governor. The legislation recognizes and addresses the serious impacts COVID-19 has wrought on the healthcare system, and takes substantial steps towards both short- and long-term system reforms. Please see our linked summary [here](#).

Importantly, this includes a permanent extension on payment rate parity for behavioral health services delivered via telehealth, as well as expansions to nurse scope of practice and improved coverage for COVID-19 testing.

We are grateful to both our Senate and House partners for including this vital provision, including conferee members Sen. Friedman, Chair of the Committee on Health Care Financing; Sen. Cyr, Chair of the Committee on Mental Health, Substance Use and Recovery; House Majority Leader Mariano, Rep. Mahoney, Chair of the Committee on Public Health; Sen. Tran and Rep. Hunt. We are likewise thankful to Senate President Spilka and House Speaker DeLeo for their leadership.

This legislation will improve the delivery of services for both providers and patients during the COVID-19 emergency and beyond, and we look forward to its successful implementation.

CCBHC Grant Opportunity

SAMHSA has announced that applications for FY21 CCBHC grants are now being accepted. The grants are available to community treatment providers in every state.

Qualified applicants must be a CCBHC or be able to meet the requirements of a CCBHC within four months of receiving a grant. Applicants must be either a nonprofit or local government behavioral health authority. CCBHC Expansion grant recipients that received funding under CCBHCs Expansion FOA (SM-20- 012, with funding announcements made in 2020) are not eligible to apply for funding under this FOA.

The National Council will be hosting a Q&A session with details to be announced soon, but in advance of that meeting, here are a few items of interest:

SAMHSA is accepting 74 applications, meaning that competition will be strong. The amount of the grants will be \$2 million per year for 2 years. Applications are due March 1.

Please feel free to reach out to CCBHC@thenationalcouncil.org with any questions, ideas, or comments.

Reminder: PPE—National Council Partnership with Panacea Life

At the link below please find information on the National Council's partnership with [Panacea Life](#) to deliver a variety of PPE at reduced rates.

To take advantage of this opportunity, visit [Panacea Life's online store](#), where you will find a variety of PPE for purchasing. For information on each item, including shipping information, please click on the item. This store will be regularly updated based on available inventory.

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Happy New Year!

The Association for Behavioral Healthcare (ABH) team wishes you and your loved ones a Happy New Year!

This year has been defined by the COVID-19 pandemic. It has also been characterized by all that you have done on behalf of your organization and your perseverance and creativity in providing innovative behavioral health services and comprehensive care to the Commonwealth's most vulnerable populations.

Thank you for your membership, the important work that you do, and for allowing us to support you through these unprecedented times. We are honored to have served you throughout this past year, and we are looking forward to our continued collaboration as we enter into 2021.



Revised Exposure & Return to Work Guidance

The Massachusetts COVID-19 Command Center has updated its Exposure & Return to Work Guidance as of December 7, 2020. The revised guidance reflects the option for a shortened strict quarantine period of 7 days which requires that:

- A test (either PCR or antigen) taken on Day 5 or later is negative; AND
- The individual has not experienced any symptoms up to that point; AND
- The individual conducts active monitoring through Day 14.

An individual must actively monitor symptoms and take their temperature once daily. IF even mild symptoms develop or the individual has a temperature of 100.0 F, they must immediately self-isolate, contact the public health authority overseeing their quarantine and get tested.

The revised guidance can be found here: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/return-to-work-guidance/download>.

Interesting Reads

- [Mass. renews public health campaign to end the stigma of addiction.](#) *The Boston Globe.*
- [ER visits, long waits climb for kids in mental health crisis.](#) *The Boston Globe.*
- [Small Number of Covid Patients Develop Severe Psychotic Symptoms.](#) *New York Times.*
- [KHN's 'What the Health?': 2020 in Review — It Wasn't All COVID.](#) *Kaiser Health News.*