



ABH August Committee Meetings

Friday, August 11
Corporate Compliance,
10 a.m.

Monday, August 14
Billing, 10 a.m.

To learn more about ABH's Committees, click [here](#).

ABH SUD Issue Brief Coverage

A workforce crisis is causing significant access delays to substance use disorder treatment, at a time when overdose rates continue to rise. Staffing challenges make it more difficult for individuals to access the care they need, when they need it. ABH surveyed members to learn about the depth of their workforce challenges in April 2022.

Learn more by reading our SUD issue brief "[Thirty-Four Days and Counting: Waits for SUD Treatment Lengthen Due to Workforce Crisis](#)." You can also follow the brief's coverage, including the following:

Worcester Business Journal

As workforce dwindles, wait time for substance abuse treatment grows
by Isabel Tehan

The average wait time for admission to a residential rehabilitation center for substance-abuse disorders is 34 days across Massachusetts, according to a new report from the Association for Behavioral Healthcare. Read [more](#).

WBZ News Radio 1030

Addiction Treatment Workforce Breaking Down, Trade Group Reports
by Chris Lisinkski

BOSTON (State House News Service) -Potent worker shortages are putting critical treatment services out of reach for Bay Staters struggling with substance use disorder, particularly those relying on safety net benefits, a new report warns.

While overdoses in Massachusetts continue to kill more than 2,000 people each year, nearly a quarter of jobs in the substance use disorder treatment system are unfilled and the average wait for admission to some longer-term residential recovery programs is more than a month, the Association for Behavioral Healthcare said. Read [more](#).

90.9 WBUR Radio

"A workers shortage is making it hard for people with substance use disorder in Massachusetts to get the services they need..." by Josie Guarino

Play [sound file](#).

Important Massachusetts Healthcare Workforce Survey

ABH members know that workforce is a key challenge that impacts the ability to provide timely, quality health care. Recent ABH issue briefs have documented the impact of the workforce crisis on access to [outpatient services](#) and to [substance use disorder treatment and recovery beds and Opioid Treatment Program care](#). We anticipate that an upcoming brief on MassHealth and commercial children's behavioral health services will show similar challenges.

ABH is partnering with the Center for Health Information and Analysis (CHIA) on a statewide MA Healthcare Workforce Survey. CHIA is a state agency responsible for providing reliable and meaningful information on the Massachusetts health care system. This survey will collect new workforce information across ten different healthcare sectors to highlight the challenges provider organizations are facing, the strategies being pursued to address these challenges, and potential policy solutions.

It is crucial for behavioral health to be represented in the Commonwealth's data collection. *The first phase will include mental health clinic and SUD 24/7 services.* It will give us new valuable information to be able to advocate with the Healey Administration and the Legislature for policies and programs on your behalf, such as pipeline, licensing, and payment reforms.

CEOs of organizations that deliver mental health clinic or SUD 24/7 services will receive an invitation to take the online survey in July. The survey asks about recruitment and retention challenges, staff vacancies, turnover, compensation, demographics and diversity, workforce strategies, and recommendations for impacting state policy. *Participating providers will also receive a tailored benchmark report from CHIA that will allow you to compare your organization with others in the state.* You can find out more about the survey on CHIA's website here: <https://mahealthsurveys.gov/mhcw/>.

Please keep an eye out for the upcoming survey invitation! We are counting on you to help us represent behavioral health on workforce issues so that we can support effective policies and programs in Massachusetts.

CHW Experience Pathway Update - July 2023

At its regularly scheduled meeting on Tuesday, June 13, 2023, the Board of Community Health Workers reviewed 272 CMR 4.02(3)(b) and discussed the original sunset date of July 31, 2023, of the work-experience pathway, and voted to extend it to July 31, 2025. This decision will further facilitate the certification pathway of Community Health Workers throughout the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, allowing applicants with 4,000 hours work-experience to apply for certification. This decision is also mindful that Community Health Workers have an additional pathway to certification with 2,000 hours work-experience in addition to the completion of an 80-hour, board approved Community Health Workers Education & Training Program.

As of July 7, 2023 there are 12 board-approved Community Health Workers Programs available to those applicants who meet such criteria.

Should you have any questions, kindly contact the Board of Community Health Workers at 617-973-0806.

Final Deadline Extended to July 21! ABH Salary Survey 2023

The Association for Behavioral Healthcare (ABH), in partnership with Gallagher Surveys, has developed a salary and benefits survey that focuses specifically on mental health and substance use disorder providers. The project was developed with guidance from the ABH Human Resources Committee. This survey is a follow up to ABH's previous surveys. **We are still looking for more participation from ABH members!**

ABH strongly encourages your organization to participate in the survey. Strong participation will greatly increase the value of the data and ensure that you have access to comprehensive salary and benefits information. **The deadline for participation in this survey has been extended to Friday, July 21, 2023. This will be the final extension.**

Completing the Survey

ABH will not see any of the raw data and the final report will not contain any identifying information. Any information that could be used to identify a provider organization will be kept strictly confidential. **Survey data must be submitted to Gallagher Surveys.** Directions on how to complete and submit the survey are included in the "Survey Instructions" tab in the [2023 Compensation Reporting Template](#).

Please remember that each survey reporting form consists of two parts: the online data submission form (Policy and benefits data) and the Excel file (compensation data) linked above.

Survey Cost

We will continue to provide a significant discount to ABH members who **participate in the salary survey**. The cost to purchase the survey will be as follows:

\$400 for ABH members who participate in the survey

\$1400 for ABH members who do not participate, but who wish to purchase the survey

This survey is **not** available to non-members.

What To Expect

Gallagher Surveys compiles survey information in a report that includes information on key position salaries as well as benefit and compensation strategies. A sample of what you can expect from the salary survey report is [here](#). The data previewed in this attachment is from our 2019 survey report.

Questions?

We anticipate that this salary survey will be a great resource for behavioral health providers.

If you have any issues accessing the survey, please do not hesitate to contact Meg Socha at msocha@abhmass.org.

If you have any questions about how to respond to the salary survey, or are unable to supply information, please contact Thomas Cummins from Gallagher Surveys at Thomas_Cummins@ajg.com.

Save the Date!

Save the date for NatCon24, the largest conference in mental health and substance use treatment! Get ready to network with 5,000+ colleagues from across the country, hear from the best minds in health care and experience three days of industry-leading learning. Registration opens this fall!

April 15-17, 2024,
St. Louis, Missouri

Additional details available [here](#).

July Health Care Provider Cybersecurity Call

Join the Massachusetts eHealth Institute (MeHI) and the MassCyberCenter on **July 13 at 10:00 a.m.** for their monthly health care provider cybersecurity call. As always, they will be joined by representatives of CISA New England and the Massachusetts State Police and Commonwealth Fusion Center who will provide updates on recent cyber threats and trends. This call will include a presentation from MassCyberCenter Director John Petrozzelli on cybersecurity risks to health care providers and best practices to follow.

These calls will continue to occur on the second Thursday of every month and will feature a discussion leader from MeHI and the MassCyberCenter, CISA, the Commonwealth Fusion Center, and additional guest speakers to provide updates on emerging threats and cover a monthly topic of interest from the group.

If you have any questions on the series please email fathy@masstech.org.

Register for the call [here](#).

This series was developed as an outcome of the 2020 Baseline Cybersecurity of Massachusetts Healthcare Provider Survey. The Association for Behavioral Healthcare, Home Care Alliance of Massachusetts, LeadingAge Massachusetts, Massachusetts Health & Hospital Association, Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers, Massachusetts Medical Society, and Massachusetts Senior Care Association partnered with MeHI and the MassCyberCenter to develop and circulate the survey.

Blog Spotlight

The following is an excerpt from the National Council for Mental Wellbeing's Blog: [Licensure Exams Test Our Ability to Improve Recruitment](#).

The workforce shortage represents a major hurdle in efforts to provide treatment and care for those with a substance use or mental health challenge.

Federal data clearly illustrates the need for more workers. The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) estimates the shortage of mental health professionals was nearly 8,000 in 2022, up from 2,593 in 2013. That has left more than 158 million people without access to care, up from 94.8 million a decade ago, according to HRSA....

Available data also points to a striking absence of diversity within the field of substance use and mental health treatment and care. Only 4% of psychologists are Black, while 86% are White, according to an American Psychological Association report.

So, what's at the root of the problem?

Motivo Health suggested in a new research paper that more than half of mental health therapists eligible to get their license to practice fail to do so. Only 43% of master's level graduates make it to licensure, with 57% facing barriers that block them from achieving their career goal somewhere in the years following graduation and their exam.

The high debt students incur obtaining a master's degree in social work or mental health therapy — coupled with the low pay they receive when they enter the field — represents the primary reason graduates don't take exams to receive a license to practice.

Read the rest of the blog entry [here](#).

New Study: Behavioral Health Workforce Shortage Will Negatively Impact Society

New survey data from the National Council for Mental Wellbeing, conducted by The Harris Poll, finds that the vast majority (83%) of the nation's behavioral health workforce believes that without public policy changes, provider organizations won't be able to meet the demand for mental health or substance use treatment and care. The survey, conducted among 750 behavioral health workers and more than 2,000 U.S. adults, also warns of a potential exodus of behavioral health workers due to burnout.

KEY FINDINGS

- The vast majority (83%) of the nation's behavioral health workforce believes that without public policy changes, provider organizations won't be able to meet the demand for mental health or substance use treatment and care.
- Around nine in 10 behavioral health workers are concerned about the ability for those not currently receiving care to gain access to care (90%) and the ability to provide care in the event of another health crisis in the future (87%).
- Nearly two in three (65%) reported increased client caseload, and more than seven in 10 (72%) reported increased client severity since the COVID-19 pandemic.
- More than nine in 10 behavioral health workers (93%) said they have experienced burnout, and a majority report suffering from moderate or severe levels of burnout (62%).
- Nearly half (48%) of behavioral health workers say the impacts of workforce shortages have caused them to consider other employment options.
- More than four in five behavioral health workers (83%) worry that workforce shortages in the mental health and substance use industry will negatively impact society as a whole.
- A third of the workforce reported spending most of their time on administrative tasks, with 68% of those who provide care to patients saying the amount of time spent on administrative tasks takes away from time they could be directly supporting clients.

Help Wanted in Behavioral Health

National survey of behavioral health workers warns shortage will have negative impact on society.

NATIONAL COUNCIL
for Mental Wellbeing



83%

of the nation's behavioral health workforce believe that **without public policy changes**, provider organizations won't be able to meet the demand for mental health or substance use treatment and care.

ACCESS TO CARE

90%  87%

are concerned about the ability of those not currently receiving care to gain access to care.

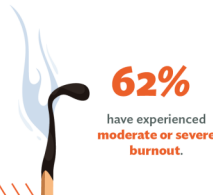
are concerned about the ability to provide care in the event of another health crisis in the future.

CASELOADS & SEVERITY

NEARLY **2 in 3** MORE THAN **7 in 10** 

Reported increased client caseload.

Reported increased client severity since the COVID-19 pandemic.



48% say the impacts of workforce shortages have caused them to consider other employment options.

83%

worry that **shortages in the mental health and substance use treatment workforce will negatively impact society** as a whole.

1/3

OF THE WORKFORCE report spending most of their time on administrative tasks.

68%

of those who provide care to patients say the amount of time spent on administrative tasks **takes away from time they could be directly supporting clients.**

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Save the Date: ABH Salute to Excellence



Friday, October 20th, 2023 from 9:00am - 2:00pm
Sheraton Framingham Hotel & Conference Center

ABH's [Salute to Excellence](#) has traditionally been a celebratory day when we recognize individuals and groups, often clinical and direct care staff, who have made outstanding contributions to community-based behavioral healthcare in Massachusetts. This year's celebration will take place at the [Sheraton Framingham Hotel & Conference Center](#).

Stay tuned this summer for additional details, including awardee nomination forms. The formal event invitation will follow soon.

Accommodations

If you have a request for a reasonable accommodation, please contact Meg Socha at msocha@abhmass.org. Accommodation requests must be submitted by Friday, September 1st to allow for adequate planning. We appreciate your understanding.

Questions:

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Meg Socha at msocha@abhmass.org.

Interesting Reads

- [Massachusetts to receive over \\$1 billion in opioid settlements.](#) WBUR.
- [Health leaders call for action to end disparities that cost Mass. an estimated \\$5.9 billion per year.](#) WBUR.
- [Rise in Use of Mental Health Apps Raises New Policy Issues.](#) Kaiser Family Foundation.
- [A deadly new street drug caught the U.S. off guard. Experts say it'll happen again.](#) NPR.
- [Officials assess MassHealth eligibility for 2.4 million members.](#) WBUR.
- [The growth mind-set: Why friends, family and work make a difference.](#) The Washington Post