



ABH April Committee Meetings

Friday, April 1
Children's CEO, 10 a.m.

Thursday, April 7
SOAP, 10 a.m.

Friday, April 8
Corporate Compliance,
10 a.m.

Monday, April 11
Billing, 10 a.m.

Tuesday, April 12
ACCS, 2:30 p.m.

Wednesday, April 13
HR, 1 p.m.

Thursday, April 14
COE RRS, 1 p.m.

Tuesday, April 19
OTP, 9:30 a.m.

Wednesday, April 20
Outpatient, 10 a.m.

Thursday, April 28
BH CP, 10 a.m.

Friday, April 29
PDT/PHP, 10
a.m.

ABH Issue Brief: Outpatient Mental Health Access and Workforce Crisis

In the late Fall, ABH surveyed members that operate mental health clinics regarding access to services and their workforce. **Thank you to our members who responded to this survey!** Unsurprisingly, the findings show unacceptable wait times to access services, long periods of time to fill vacancies, and evidence of staff departures that threaten the entire behavioral healthcare delivery system. The survey responses indicate:

- Nearly half (46%) of respondents report it taking 9 months or more to fill an independently licensed clinician position;
- Two-thirds (67%) of respondents report it taking 9 months or more to fill an MD prescriber position;
- Clinics surveyed reported an average of 17 staff vacancies; and,
- For every 10 clinicians entering work in mental health clinics, 13 clinicians leave.

This workforce crisis translates to an access crisis:

- Mental health clinics served 11% fewer individuals in 2021 than in 2019 prior to the pandemic;
- The average wait time for an initial assessment for children is 13.6 weeks;
- The average wait time for an initial assessment for adults is 10 weeks; and
- The average wait time for ongoing therapy is 15.3 weeks for children and 12.7 weeks for an adult.

This occurs at a time where need for services is increasing. A recent Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation reinforced this (see page 2 for more information). These data are particularly troubling given the pivotal role that clinics play training the clinician workforce for the health care delivery system. A complement of short-, mid- and long-term solutions, including additional investment in outpatient services, is needed to prevent significant long-term retrenchment.

Our brief summarizing of those findings and making recommendations to improve access to outpatient services is available [here](#). These findings will be used to further our ongoing advocacy.

March is
Social
Work
Month

ABH
celebrates
the
invaluable
work of
social
workers.

Thank you
for making
all of our
lives better.

Outpatient Mental Health Access and Workforce Crisis: Media Coverage

- [Clinicians are leaving their jobs at mental health centers amid rising demand](#) – *Boston Globe*
- [Report finds a “workforce crisis” is behind long waits for mental health care in Massachusetts](#) – WBUR ([broadcast](#))
- [124 mental health clinics report 640 job vacancies](#) – *CommonWealth Magazine*
- [Survey details outpatient mental health care crisis](#) – WWLP
- [Study: Mental Health Clinicians Dropping Out Of Workforce](#) – WBZ-TV
- [GBH broadcast](#) – GBH News
- [Survey: Workforce crisis hits behavioral healthcare providers](#) – *Worcester Business Journal*
- [Massachusetts mental health clinics see clinician exodus](#) – *Becker’s Hospital Review*
- [Survey Highlights Behavioral Health Workforce Gaps in Massachusetts](#) – *Healthcare Innovation*

Behavioral Health During the Pandemic

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation recently released an issue brief: [Behavioral Health During the First Year of the COVID-19 Pandemic: An Update on Need and Access in Massachusetts 2020/2021](#), that looks at the need for behavioral health care and individual’s experiences accessing care in Massachusetts between January 2020 and March 2021.

According to Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation:

- More than one in three (35%) Massachusetts adults ages 19 and over reported needing behavioral health care for themselves or a close relative over the past 12 months, which corresponds to roughly the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Notably, more than a quarter (27%) of Massachusetts adults reported needing behavioral health care for themselves over the past 12 months, with the level of need disproportionately high among younger adults ages 19-39, among adults who identify as a race or ethnicity other than non-Hispanic White, and among adults with lower family incomes.
- Among the Massachusetts adults who reported needing behavioral health care over the past 12 months, 26% did not receive any behavioral health care, and fewer than half (43%) of those who did receive some behavioral health care services were always able to obtain an appointment when they needed behavioral health care.
- The survey also reinforced that the trauma and stress caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on behavioral health care needs in Massachusetts as 64% of the adults who reported a need for behavioral health care over the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic reported that their need was due to or exacerbated by the pandemic.

MassHealth 1115 Waiver Comments Submitted

ABH submitted comments to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) in support of MassHealth's 1115 demonstration extension request. In the comments, ABH expressed its enthusiastic support for MassHealth's renewal proposal, which includes significant investments for behavioral health, including continued expansion of substance use disorder (SUD) services, continuation of the Behavioral Health Community Partner program, expansion of diversionary behavioral health services to MassHealth's fee-for-services members, eligibility and coverage expansion for incarcerated individuals and other vulnerable populations and vital behavioral health workforce retention and diversity initiatives. You can read the full comments [here](#).

ABH Salary Survey

We are extremely pleased to announce that 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 has developed with guidance from the ABH Human Resources Committee.

Based on ABH member feedback, ABH has worked with Gallagher Surveys to adjust the structure of this year's survey, specifically the compensation excel portion. The email announcing and providing details on this update is [linked here](#) for your convenience. Additionally, the updated compensation reporting template is [linked here](#).

We are distributing the survey via email (contact Meg Socha at msocha@abhmass.org) and strongly encourage 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 the survey is March 11, 2022. We anticipate that this salary survey will be a great resource for behavioral health providers.

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 PDF available [here](#)

Survey Cost

As with past surveys, a significant discount will be given 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

\$1200 for ABH members who do not participate, but who wish to purchase the survey

This survey is not available to non-members.

Questions?

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.

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NatCon22

Registration for the National Council's annual conference, NatCon22, is now open! NatCon22 will take place from April 11-13, 2022 at the Gaylord National Resort & Convention Center in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area.

By registering for NatCon22, you can also experience Hill Day 2022 and a Mental Health First Aid Summit (for instructors/trainers only). The NatCon 22 landing page is [here](#).

ABH Member Discount: Verified ABH members can access a \$50 discount registering for NatCon22 MAmember22. The code can be entered into the "discount code" box on the top of the page where the full conference registration type is selected

Provider Salary Reporting

The Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) published the 2022 Provider Salary Reporting for POS/Chapter 257 programs at this link. This report is required under Chapter 257 reporting rules. The reporting tool is available [here](#). Instructions for completion and submission are found on the first tab titled "Instructions". Supplemental guidance was recently published and is available here. Although the reporting tool continues to state a February reporting deadline, the deadline has been extended to 5 p.m. on Friday, March 4, 2022.

Parent / Professional Advocacy League (PPAL) Resources

- [Youth MOVE Massachusetts - Virtual Youth Group](#)
- [Coping During COVID: How Parents Rated Family Peer Support \(PPAL Family Driven Research\)](#)
- [Telehealth for Families and Youth - What's Their Take \(PPAL Family Driven Research\)](#)

Interesting Reads

- [Mental health emergencies rise with heat for all ages, study finds.](#) *WBUR Health.*
- [\\$50 million planned to better protect kids in state custody.](#) *WBUR Health.*
- [We need an Operation Warp Speed for kids' mental health.](#) *Boston Globe.*
- [Targeted by Politicians, Trans Youth Struggle With Growing Fear and Mental Health Concerns.](#) *Kaiser Health News.*
- [Outpatient telehealth use soared early in the COVID-19 pandemic but has since receded.](#) *Kaiser Family Foundation.*