



## ABH June Committee Meetings

Friday, June 2  
**Children's CEO Leadership**, 10 a.m.

Tuesday, June 6  
**ATS/CSS**, 10 a.m.

Wednesday, June 7  
**eHealth**, 10 a.m.

Thursday, June 8  
**SOAP**, 10 a.m.

Friday, June 9  
**Corporate Compliance**, 10 a.m.

Monday, June 12  
**Billing**, 10 a.m.

Tuesday, June 13  
**ACCS**, 2:30 p.m.

Wednesday, June 14  
**Outpatient**, 10 a.m.  
**HR**, 2:30 p.m.

Thursday, June 15  
**COE RRS**, 1 p.m.

Tuesday, June 20  
**OTP**, 9:30 a.m.

Wednesday, June 21  
**MAP Subcommittee**, 10 a.m.

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

## ABH Annual Meeting

Every May, ABH holds its Annual Meeting to bring together the entire ABH membership for an opportunity to network, conduct association business, and hear from ABH and policymakers or thought leaders. We were extremely excited that this year we returned to an in-person meeting. On May 9, we were joined by EOHHS Secretary Kate Walsh for a fireside chat where the Secretary shared her insights with ABH President and CEO Lydia Conley on delivering behavioral health services to the citizens of the Commonwealth.



## FY 2024 Senate Ways and Means Budget

The Senate Committee on Ways and Means released their recommendations for the [Fiscal Year 2024 Budget](#). The \$55.8B proposal represents a \$3.4B increase of FY23 General Appropriations Act (GAA). Their recommendation is based on a tax revenue estimate of \$40.41B for FY24. ABH's complete analysis can be found [here](#). The FY24 Senate Ways and Means proposed budget includes the following highlights:

- The Department of Mental Health (DMH) is funded at \$1.13B.
- The Adult Community Services line item (5046-0000) is funded at \$598M, \$15M higher than projected FY23 spending.
- Bureau of Substance Addiction Services (BSAS) programmatic accounts are consolidated and funded at \$220M.
- MassHealth is funded at \$19.93B to fully support the FY24 caseload estimates.
- The Chapter 257 rate reserve (1599-6903) is funded at \$173M and represents the costs of an updated rate methodology benchmarking wages to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) 53rd percentile.
- \$192M in appropriations are made from federal ARPA funds to support the behavioral health workforce, drawing from recommendations from ABH through our participation in the Behavioral Health Trust Fund Advisory Commission.

# Behavioral Health Urgent Care Rates

As part of the Roadmap for Behavioral Health Reform, MassHealth established a Behavioral Health Urgent Care (BHUC) program. Behavioral Health Urgent Care providers must increase timely access to treatment for MassHealth members, including offering same- or next-day appointments and night and weekend hours.

Effective February 1, 2022, MCEs are required to pay no less than the rates set by MassHealth for Urgent Care, which constitutes a 15% increase over the current minimum rates. All MCEs are required to pay no less than the enhanced rates for the specified services provided at any Behavioral Health Urgent Care provider site in the MCEs provider network.

This is an exciting initiative to expand access. More than 50 ABH member sites are participating to date.

There has been some confusion regarding the rate increase for Behavioral Health Urgent Care providers.

To clarify:

## Payment and Delivery Structure

- The 15% rate increase should apply to all services in the fee schedule at the Behavioral Health Urgent Care center, not just clinically urgent encounters. This is to allow Urgent Care Centers to meet the urgent care access standards. It is not a differentiated “level of care”.
- Providers do not need to distinguish the encounters that are clinically urgent from those that are routine in order for the 15% rate increase to apply.

## All MassHealth Billing

- BHUC sites should submit claims using the GJ modifier to receive the 15% rate enhancement. The GJ modifier should apply to all eligible services delivered in the urgent care site.
- The 15% enhancement applies on top of any emergency rate add-ons.

## MassHealth Fee For Service

- The Mental Health Center rate regulation has a separate fee schedule for the Urgent Care Centers. This can be found [here](#) (101 CMR 306.3 (5) (b)). All codes are listed at the 15% higher rate with a GJ modifier.
- Urgent Care Centers should submit all codes in this [table](#) (101 CMR 306.3 (5) (b)) with the GJ modifier listed in the primary position, followed by any applicable licensure level modifier.
- MMIS will process codes with the GJ modifier at the 15% higher rate.

## MassHealth Managed Care Entities

- MassHealth Managed Care Entity Bulletin 76 includes billing guidance and can be found [here](#).
- Eligible services can be found in the MassHealth Managed Care Entity Bulletin 83 [here](#).

## Becoming a Behavioral Health Urgent Care

Community Mental Health Center sites that would like to participate in the MassHealth Behavioral Health Urgent Care Program should complete the [Attestation Form](#). ABH strongly encourages members to consider participating. Please direct any questions to the Massachusetts Behavioral Health Partnership dedicated mailbox: [BH Urgent Care Attestation](#).

## Keeping Coverage

As of April 1, 2023, MassHealth has begun the eligibility redetermination process, renewing all 2.3M members over the following 12 months. This will generally be the first-time members are at risk of losing their coverage since February 2020.

MassHealth has created a guide as a resource for organizations that help MassHealth members understand how to get – and keep – their health care coverage they are eligible for. This guide contains information for individuals working in the community who typically interact with MassHealth members.

[MassHealth Renewal Help Guide](#)

## Relaunch of ACOs

MassHealth managed care eligible members include members younger than 65, with no TPL (including Medicare), living in the community, and in the following MassHealth coverage types: Standard, CarePlus, CommonHealth, or Family Assistance can select to join an Accountable Care Organization (ACO) plan, Managed Care Plan (MCO), or the Primary Care Clinician (PCC) plan. MassHealth originally launched the Accountable Care Organization (ACO) program in March 2018. Through a re-procurement, MassHealth selected 17 healthcare organizations to participate in the MassHealth ACO program. The new health plans have launched as of April 1, 2023. MassHealth ACOs are integrated networks of physicians, hospitals, and other community-based healthcare providers that are accountable for the quality, cost, and member experience of care for 1.2 million MassHealth members.

In February, members were mailed notices providing updates about their enrollment in the MassHealth health plan. Member enrollment in ACOs will be based on their relationship with their current primary care provider to ensure continuity of care. Members generally follow their Primary Care Providers (PCP). If a member's PCP assignment is not available in their systems, the member will move with their ACO partner.

Depending on whether a member is special assigned, or not being moved to a new plan, they will receive different messaging in 2023.

MassHealth has released a presentation slide deck that will help you to:

- Identify MassHealth's health plan options available for selection starting April 1, 2023
- Describe the types of messages members may receive about their health plan enrollment
- Identify key dates, continuity of care period, and actions
- Explain how members can learn, find a MassHealth health plan or providers, and enroll in a plan

Click to access [MassHealth Health Plan Updates: Relaunch of ACO Programs presentation](#).

### Resources

- **March 16th MassHealth BH Webinar Presentation.** On March 16th, MassHealth held a webinar for BH providers on the ACO Program relaunch. The webinar presentation is [here](#).
- **ABH Crosswalk.** ABH has developed a crosswalk of current ACOs to new ACOs. That crosswalk is available [here](#).
- **ABH Overview Presentation.** ABH has developed a high-level overview of ACO Program Relaunch. That deck is available [here](#).

## ABH STAFF

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# Welcome Kristen Hackney!

ABH is pleased to announce that Kristen Hackney, LMHC, has joined ABH as our new Senior Director of Behavioral Health Policy Transformation.

Kristen serves as staff lead to key priority areas: Outpatient Services, Behavioral Health Community Partners, and Community Behavioral Health Centers.

Before joining ABH, Kristen most recently worked as Manager of Community Partners Programs at WellSense Health Plan. Prior to that, she had roles that required developing strong relationships and driving change with health care providers and persons-served. She also has patient care experience in community settings such as psychiatric day treatment. This experience aligns directly with her new role as ABH's behavioral health policy transformation lead.

Kristen has a Bachelor's and a Master's degree in Counseling Psychology from Boston College and is a licensed mental health counselor. Please join us in welcoming Kristen! Kristen can be reached at [khackney@abhmass.org](mailto:khackney@abhmass.org) or (857) 245-9007.

## MassHealth Provider Association Forum

The Massachusetts Executive Office of Health & Human Services has released their presentation from the April 19, 2023 MassHealth Provider Association Forum. This presentation contains information for individuals working in the community who typically interact with MassHealth members, and is intended to give these individuals helpful tips for how they can help MassHealth members understand how to complete their renewal.

This presentation will help to explain what MassHealth Renewal is; discuss why renewals are especially important this upcoming year (2023 - 2024); and share what you can do to support MassHealth members in preparing for and understanding how to complete renewals. To access this presentation, click [here](#).

## Interesting Reads

- [End of Covid Emergency Will Usher in Changes Across the US Health System](#). *KFF Health News*.
- [California's Medicaid Experiment Spends Money to Save Money — And Help the Homeless](#). *KFF Health News*.
- [Mass. LGBTQ youth commission propose policy changes amid nationwide threats](#). *WBUR*.
- [How Many People Might Lose Medicaid When States Unwind Continuous Enrollment?](#) *Kaiser Family Foundation*.
- [She provides counseling to the most entrenched individuals at Mass. and Cass. She wants you to know her story](#). *Boston.com*.
- [Mass. set up a mental health hotline. 6,000 people called in the first 3 months](#). *WBUR CommonHealth*.