



The Campaign to **STRENGTHEN
HUMAN SERVICES**
IMPROVE CARE • RETAIN QUALITY STAFF
ENHANCE ECONOMIC IMPACT

November 23, 2020

RE: *Letter from The Collaborative on Conference Committee budget*

Dear Chairman Michlewitz, Chairman Rodrigues, Vice Chair Garlick, Vice Chair Friedman, Representative Smola and Senator O'Connor:

On behalf of community-based human services organizations throughout Massachusetts, thank you for your tireless support of our sector and workforce during the FY '21 budget process.

We write to thank you for your inclusion of \$160 million in funding for the Chapter 257 Rate Reserve (1599-6903). This line item will ensure EOHHS has the necessary funding to meet its obligations under Chapter 257 of the Acts of 2008, the landmark rate-setting legislation that our organizations worked to pass 12 years ago. This funding will allow for programs to receive market-based increases and help providers raise the pay of low-paid workers in our sector, particularly those in the direct care, nursing and clinical areas.

As you know, the Executive Office of Health and Human Services has begun to create model budgets for human services programs using data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics rather than the Uniform Financial Report when setting rates for services. This is a change that is expected to help providers pay their employees market-based salaries as those rates of pay have been depressed for many years. We advocated for this change, and we have been meeting with the administration to discuss the appropriate BLS data to use when creating model budgets. We know more information is needed in this area about the current rates of pay and how BLS data can best be used to help ensure workers in our sector earn a market-based, appropriate wage.

Therefore, we are asking you to include this language – present in the House's version of the FY '21 budget – in the final Conference Committee spending plan.

"...provided further, that not later than March 5, 2021, the executive office health and human services shall report to the house and senate committees on ways and means a comparison of the median salary for each classification of staff position with the 75th percentile wage estimate for that position as determined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics for Massachusetts in the most recent available data."

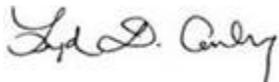
We believe these metrics are crucial to understanding the full extent to which wages and salaries for human services personnel differ from the fair market value of comparable work.

The community-based human services sector is an essential one, which has more than 180,000 jobs and cares for one-in-ten state residents. The COVID-19 pandemic has made our ability to recruit and retain

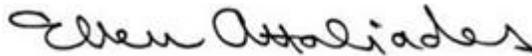
workers increasingly difficult, and we need to ensure our sector is offering market-based salaries to fill vacant positions and provide high-quality services to consumers. This language will help us see the strides the Commonwealth has already taken in helping the community-based human services sector pay a fair market wage and what progress we still have to make.

Again, thank you for your support of the community-based human services sector in Massachusetts and the many programs in your districts. We appreciate your positive consideration of this request, and we would be happy to meet with you to discuss it in additional detail.

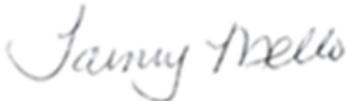
Sincerely yours,



Lydia Conley
President/CEO
Association for Behavioral Healthcare



Ellen Attaliades
President/CEO
Association of Developmental Disabilities Providers



Tammy Mello
Executive Director
Children's League of Massachusetts



Michael Weekes
President/CEO
Providers' Council

CC: Speaker of the House Robert DeLeo
Senate President Karen Spilka