



**ABH May
Committee Meetings**

Friday, May 6
Children's Policy, 10 a.m.

Tuesday, May 9
Billing, 9:30 a.m.

Tuesday, May 10
CBFS, 3 p.m.

Thursday, May 12
SOAP, 10:00 a.m.

Friday, May 13
Corporate Compliance,
10:00 a.m.

Monday, May 16
In-home Therapy, 2 p.m.
(Framingham Public Library)

Tuesday, May 17
Methadone, 9:30 a.m.

Thursday, May 19
Human Resources, 9:30 a.m.

Friday, May 20
Children's Services, 9:30 a.m.
(Worcester Youth Guidance
Center)
Quality and Outcomes, 9:30
a.m. (Advocates, Inc.)

Friday, May 27
PDT/PH, 10 a.m.

Tuesday, May 31
CSS, 10:00 a.m.

All meetings are at ABH unless
otherwise noted. For more
information, call
508-647-8385.

Healthcare Reform and Its Impact on Behavioral Health

**ABH invites you to join your colleagues
for our 2011 Annual Meeting!**

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Christie L. Hager, J.D., M.P.H.

Regional Director

US Department of Health and Human Services - Region I

followed by a

PANEL PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

Tuesday, May 10th from 12:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Best Western Royal Plaza, Marlborough

Registration will begin at 10:30 a.m. along with an

EXHIBITOR FAIR

OVERVIEW: We invite staff from our member organizations to join their colleagues from across the state to engage in this important discussion around healthcare reform and its impact on behavioral health.

FEE: \$50.00, Lunch included
Payment must be received on or before event

TO REGISTER: Please click on the link below

[Register Now!](#)

Questions?

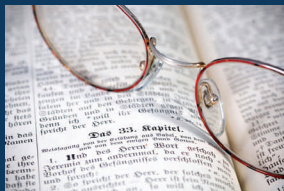
Please contact Jessica Hammond at 508-647-8385 x16 or at
jhammond@abhmass.org.

SAMHSA Strategic Initiatives

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) recently published a strategic initiative paper that provides an overview of SAMHSA's goals, priorities, and action steps.

The paper looks at eight strategic initiatives aimed at reducing the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on America's communities.

To read the paper, [click here](#).



Senator Kerry Supports Health IT

ABH is extremely pleased that Senator John Kerry has signed on as a co-sponsor to S. 539, the *Behavioral Health Information Technology Act of 2011*.

This legislation ensures that behavioral health professionals, behavioral and mental health treatment facilities, addiction treatment facilities and psychiatric hospitals will be eligible to receive incentive payments for the adoption and use of electronic health records. Access to health technology, such as electronic health records, will increase efficiency and patient safety and will help us address disparities in behavioral healthcare.

Furthermore, expanding health IT payments to behavioral health providers will provide crucial support for community behavioral health organizations as they seek to implement electronic health records. ABH knows that many behavioral health-care providers are ready to move forward with implementation of electronic health records but lack the financial resources to do so at this time. Federal funding for these initiatives would help providers overcome the financial hurdle of implementation.

We thank Senator Kerry for his support!



Changes to Mental Health Clinic Regs

As you may know, ABH has been working for a number of years to update and modernize the regulation of mental health clinics. A few years ago, the Department of Public Health amended its mental health clinic regulations to reflect current clinical practice regarding multidisciplinary teams (relative to treatment planning and case review) and utilization team review. These changes had minimal operational impact on outpatient clinics because MassHealth regulations were not amended to align with the Department of Public Health changes.

ABH is extremely pleased to announce that MassHealth has promulgated changes proposed changes to its regulations that align the MassHealth clinic regulations with the Department of Public Health regulations. These changes are effective April 15, 2011. These proposed changes follow years of work by ABH and its members. The new regulations can be found [here](#).



Keeper is celebrating the new regulations with some puppy ice cream.

RFRs Cancelled

Recently, *The Collaborative* and the Patrick Administration agreed to extend the implementation timetable for Chapter 257 by 15 months. At the same time, there will be no procurements until a rate is set for that service.

As a result, the Department of Public Health/Bureau of Substance Abuse Services' has cancelled its RFRs for Clinical Stabilization Services (CSS) and Ambulatory/ Outpatient and Acupuncture Services.

Free Legal Services for Clients with Behavioral Health Disorders Who Have Been Denied Access to Care by a Health Plan

Health Law Advocates (HLA) is a legal aid organization that provides free legal services to individuals or families who have been denied access to medical care. HLA is offering FREE legal services to people with mental health and/or substance use disorders whose health care rights may have been violated under state and federal parity laws.

For example: If a client has been denied authorization for care by a commercial plan or a MassHealth managed care organization (MCO), but you had clinically assessed them as appropriate for treatment, you should ask that client if they are willing to speak to a free attorney who will help them appeal their denial of care.

The purpose of this request is to ensure that all health plans in Massachusetts are in compliance with state and federal parity laws, and that they are granting authorizations for care for behavioral health clients in an equitable manner with primary health care clients.

Please ask all clients who are denied access to care if they are willing to speak to a free attorney and, if so, call Health Law Advocates immediately at 617-338-5241 to speak with HLA's Intake Paralegal, or call 617-275-2845 to speak with Staff Attorney Jenifer Bosco. Please be sure to tell clients with substance use disorders that speaking with these attorneys will not place them in jeopardy with law enforcement due to their drug use.

The HLA attorneys may be able to help clients complete and file an appeal, and if the appeal is denied they may be able to pursue the complaint further to determine if the client's rights have been violated under state and federal parity laws.

For more information about Health Law Advocates, visit their website at www.healthlawadvocates.org. For questions about HLA's mental health parity project, contact Jenifer Bosco at 617-275-2845, or jbosco@hla-inc.org.

Capitol Hill Day

ABH will be joining mental health and addiction treatment providers from across the nation in Washington, D.C. as part of the National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare's (The National Council) Annual Hill Day on July 19 and 20. On Tuesday, we will join our colleagues for policy briefings; on Wednesday, we will have the opportunity to meet with members of the Massachusetts Congressional Delegation to discuss issues that are vital to behavioral health providers here in Massachusetts.

We hope you will join us in this important effort. If you are interested in participating or have any questions, contact Stephanie Hirst at SHirst@abhmass.org.



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Treatment Works: Successful Mental Health Strategies for Older Adults

The Massachusetts Aging and Mental Health Coalition is holding its **Annual Conference on Wednesday, April 27, 2011**. This year's conference will focus on **Treatment Works: Successful Mental Health Strategies for Older Adults**.

Details:

When? Wednesday, April 27, 8:00 a.m. to 3:15 p.m.

Where? Holy Cross College, Worcester

How much? \$60, Retired Individuals/Students, NASW members: \$50. Group rates are available. (CEUs are available)

Registration deadline: April 13, 2011

Questions? Contact Betty Mitchell at 617-628-2601, ext. 3115.

MBHP Contract Extension

MassHealth has notified the Massachusetts Behavioral Health Partnership (MBHP) that it intends to negotiate a 9-month extension to the MBHP contract (July 1, 2011 through March 31, 2012).

Smoking Cessation

Do you know a veteran who is interested in quitting smoking? From now until the end of June, Massachusetts veterans and their family members can receive a free 2-week supply of nicotine patches to help jump-start a quit attempt. For more information, click [here](#).



Integrative Care Initiative

MassHealth has released a Request for Information (RFI) relative to an initiative to integrate Medicare and Medicaid for individuals between the ages of 21-64 who are eligible for both programs (dual eligible individuals). MassHealth is proposing to combine Medicare and Medicaid funding for dually eligible individuals and will then procure contracts with entities to integrate comprehensive care at the person level and provide both MassHealth and Medicare funded services. Approximately 64% of these 115,000 individuals have a behavioral health disorder.

The RFI is available on www.Comm-Pass.org. The response deadline has been extended to May 6. ABH will be submitting a response on behalf of ABH members, but encourages member organizations to submit their own response as well.