**Minutes**

**Commissioners presen**t: Representative James O’Day (chair); Anne Boffa; Rebecca Butler; Jessie Colbert; Karin Downs; Nneka Hall; Dr. Gordon Harper; Divya Kumar; Kerry LaBounty; Representative Liz Miranda; Senator John Keenan; Dr. Lisa Scarfo; Commissioner Samantha Aigner-Treworgy; Dr. Michael Yogman; Timoria McQueen Saba, Representative Mindy Domb; Dr. Lee Cohen; Karen Crowley

**Commissioners absent:** Senator Joan Lovely (chair); Kristin Alexander; Representative Kimberly N. Ferguson; Elizabeth Fluet; Liz Friedman; Dr. Janice Goodman; Margaret Hannah; Senator Bruce Tarr; Dr. Julie Johnston; Peggy Kaufman; Dr. Monica Le; Dr. Tiffany A. Moore Simas; Dr. Alison Schonwold; Dr. Jayne Singer; Dr. Joshua Sparrow; Elizabeth Murphy; Mary Elizabeth Gamache; Eileen Terlaga; Senator Anne Gobi; Senator Diana DiZoglio; Dr. Barrie Baker; Representative Carole Fiola

**Commission staff present:** Whitney Hill, aide to Representative O’Day; Alexis Foley, aide to Representative O’Day; Johanna Wakelin, aide to Senator Lovely

Members of the public and other state employees were also present.

**1. Welcome; approval of minutes**

Johanna Wakelin welcomed Commission members and guests and approved the minutes from the Commission’s May 8th meeting. Whitney Hill welcomed our newest commissioners:

* *Nneka Hall*, Full Spectrum Doula, PAIL Advocate
* *Representative Mindy Domb*, 3rd Hampshire District
* *Representative Liz Miranda*, 5th Suffolk District
* *Senator Diana DiZoglio*, 1st Essex District
* *Senator Anne Gobi*, Worcester, Hampden, Hampshire, and Middlesex
* *Senator John Keenan*, Norfolk and Plymouth

**2. Awareness Day, Budget, and Legislative Priorities Recap**

* Whitney gave a recap of Awareness Day; please reach out to her with any feedback or ideas for the next Awareness Day coming in May. Budget updates were summarized with more details coming from DPH at the end of the meeting. Legislative priorities from the agenda were recapped; if you would like to submit testimony on a bill and want guidance on how to do that, please reach out to Whitney.

**3. Announcements from Commissioners and Attendees**

* *John Carr*: Gave an update on PSI’s successful Perinatal Mood Disorders: Components of Care training held last week in Marlborough, which was at full capacity and included topics such as PPD screening tools, barriers to care, and assessment and treatment options.
  + PSI has quarterly meetings that anyone can attend; the next one is on October 25th from 11:15-1:15 pm. Please reach out to [psiofmass@gmail.com](mailto:psiofmass@gmail.com) for questions.
* *Soraya Dos Santos*: Soraya is a psychotherapist, the Regional Coordinator for PSI of Mass, and works with mothers, children, and families primarily in New Bedford but serves the surrounding communities as well. She shared two major areas of need in Southeastern Mass:
  + Accessibility: challenges in connecting mothers to trained perinatal providers or to a supportive space where they can share their stories and be heard.
  + Patient Care: although providers are screening for PPD, a mother with a positive screen usually receives a prescription for an antidepressant without referrals or collaboration with other providers to provide comprehensive services. There is also a lack of culturally sensitive care, as Southeastern Mass is very culturally diverse, and the services available there do not match the cultural diversity of the region.
  + Soraya would love to connect with anyone who is working on the south coast, or knows anyone working with mothers and families in this area.
  + Leena Mittal responded that MCPAP for Moms is working on getting telehealth consultation available for practices in Southern MA
* *Timoria McQueen Saba:* Often, individuals make an assumption about the “community” a person identifies with based on the color of their skin, which discounts individual stories and places people of color in a position to talk about a lived experience they may not have had. If you are looking for a voice to speak on a specific issue, do not be afraid to ask for help and actually name the issue you want to bring attention to. If the goal of the Commission is to be a group that continues to work to tackle this racism and implicit bias publicly, we must be able to openly name and discuss these things with each other.
  + Social media: We should expand our presence, highlight behind the scenes work between legislators and people of color, and provide more linkage to resources and support for PPD.
  + Expressed frustration and disappointment that given her prior interest in the lack of resources and work to bring funding for maternal health to Fall River, she was not notified in advance of other members of the Commission that funding had been secured for this community.
  + Please do not reach out to offer help on any projects she is working on, unless she reaches out to you about collaboration.
  + Please bring any questions or comments about her public work directly to her for discussion, and avoid speaking behind people’s backs.
* *Divya Kumar, Timoria McQueen Saba, Leena Mittal*: Shared a summary of their Letter to the Editor, published last week in the Globe, on the discussion around racism, implicit bias, and medical mistreatment and the missing focus on mental health and integrative services in this conversation. Whitney will send the LTE to the Commission tomorrow.
* *Nneka Hall*: October is Pregnancy & Infant Loss Awareness month, and Nneka needs a wall to create a memorial to honor infants who have passed away. It will be a space where families can come and visit, as well as take a cut out heart or pumpkin to write names on and place on the wall. Oct. 15th is International Pregnancy & Infant Loss Awareness Day, but the display would be up the whole month of October.
  + Representative O’Day will look into using 4th floor gallery in the State House for this purpose
  + Senator Lovely’s office could host an additional display on the door of their office
  + Samantha Aigner-Treworgy, Commissioner for the Department of Early Education and Care, will put them at their regional offices across the state
* *Jessie Colbert*: Mass PPD fund has received a grant from Cape's Kelley Foundation to start a new support group in Falmouth, and will be working with several organizations including the Cape & Islands Maternal Depression Task Force to meet critical needs in that area.
* *Soraya Dos Santos, Nneka Hall, and Timoria McQueen Saba:* will be at Union Capital Boston on Saturday, 9/28 for the Birth Resource Fair they are organizing.
* *Leena Mittal*: MCPAP for Moms is working towards increasing their capacity to do education, outreach, and resource referral around substance use disorder for pregnant and postpartum women. They have hired a project manager and are doing needs assessments and figuring out how they can support providers and the women they are seeing. Currently they are finishing materials targeting OB providers.
* *Beth Buxton*: DPH update on allocation of funding, which went to 4 previous community health centers (Jamaica Plain, Worcester, Lynn, and Holyoke) and 2 new centers in Fall River and Salem. Jamaica Plain declined the funding this year.
  + $50k will be allocated to each site. A site visit has been conducted with SSTAR Health Center in Fall River, and a site visit in Salem is in the works. Contracts should be in place by mid-October and will run until June 30th of next year, and one of the contract requirement is to develop an outreach plan to ensure that not only are the women seen receiving support within the community center, but outside in the broader community as well.
  + Other part of the allocation: $50k allocated to the department, 2 parts: first is around education and information around PPD, second part is around data. DPH will be focusing on the data piece, and will hire a researcher/epidemiologist to partner with Beth to convene a working group for anyone interested working with data. Work will be hard and fast, since a report needs to be out by the end of June of next year.
    - The data analysis will look at:
      * 1. PPD regulations put forward by the commission. Most providers are using claims data to report their PPD screening. Numbers are very low, but providers are telling a different story, so there is a mismatch. Part of the data work would be dedicated to trying to figure out where we are falling off in that data collection and developing strategies to address it moving forward.
      * 2. What questions do we have around parental mental health? What are the data elements and data systems that we have available to us? How much will it cost and how feasible is it to utilize those data systems to answer these questions?
      * The group also discussed the limitations and challenges of claims data and analyzing outcomes.
* *Representative O’Day*: shared an open invitation to the Commission from Family Health Center and Edward M. Kennedy health center in Worcester to come tour facilities and/or hold a meeting at either site. Whitney will send out a poll to gauge interest and feasibility.

**7. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned.