MEMBERSHIP MONDAY: Parent/Professional Advocacy League (PPAL)

PROVIDERS' COUNCIL

Highlighting the Parent Professional Advocacy League's Impact on the Community

This week, for Membership Monday, we are featuring the Parent/Professional Advocacy League (PPAL), a statewide grassroots organization dedicated to supporting families and improving access to mental health services for children and youth. Through family support, peer connections, and advocacy, PPAL empowers caregivers and works to ensure family voices are heard in the systems that serve them.

Who is PPAL and What do They do?

Founded in 1991, the Parent/Professional Advocacy League (PPAL) is a statewide, grassroots family organization dedicated to supporting, educating, and advocating alongside parents and caregivers raising children, youth, and young adults with mental health challenges and juvenile justice involvement.

PPAL works to improve access to mental health services, strengthen family leadership, and create meaningful systems change. What makes PPAL unique is that its work is rooted in lived experience. Many of its staff members are parents, grandparents, and caregivers who understand firsthand the challenges families face and use those experiences to support others navigating similar circumstances.

Through free family support services, education, and advocacy, PPAL works to ensure that family voices are heard and valued by providers, policymakers, and decision-makers.

Programs and Services Include:

- Family Support Services: Connects parents and caregivers with trained family support specialists who offer guidance, encouragement, resources, and peer support based on lived experience.
- Family Support Groups: Provides opportunities for parents and family members to connect, share experiences, exchange resources, and support one another while navigating their children's mental health and behavioral health needs.
- Central Massachusetts Family Support: Offers free assistance to families navigating school systems, insurance challenges, and access to services, while helping them identify strategies and connect with other families.
- Transition-Age Youth Support: Supports families of young people ages 16–26 as they navigate the transition from childhood to adulthood and the services and resources that accompany this stage of life.
- Juvenile Justice Family Support: Helps families navigate courts, arrests, detention, and other aspects of the juvenile justice system through knowledgeable family support specialists.
- Education and Advocacy Resources: Connects families with information, tools, and advocacy resources to help them navigate special education, healthcare, and other systems while advocating for policies that better serve children and families.



When did PPAL join the Providers' Council and why?

PPAL has been a member of the Providers' Council since 1987. As a longtime member, PPAL shares the Council's commitment to strengthening the human services sector, supporting the organizations and individuals who make a difference in their communities, and advocating for policies that improve the lives of the people and families they serve. Through its work, PPAL brings an important family perspective to the broader conversations shaping the human services field.



A Voice from PPAL

PPAL is unique. Our primary mission is to support, educate, and advocate for and with parents and caregivers raising children, youth, and young adults with mental health challenges and juvenile justice involvement. We are parents and caregivers raising children, youth, and young adults, supporting other parents and caregivers. We work to ensure that family voice is heard and valued at every table that matters, with providers, policymakers, and legislative initiatives. Our services for parents and caregivers are free.

– Pamela Sager, Executive Director

Looking Ahead: PPAL's Continued Support to Families and Communities

Looking ahead, PPAL is preparing to roll out a Family Partner certification program, the first of its kind in Massachusetts. The initiative aims to elevate the role of Family Partners who provide peer support to parents and caregivers, while strengthening their effectiveness in supporting families and working alongside providers

PPAL hopes the state will eventually adopt and fund the program, creating an official certification pathway for Family Partners similar to the one established for Peer Specialists.

Through this initiative, PPAL continues to advance its commitment to strengthening family support and ensuring that parents and caregivers have access to people who understand their experiences.

Interested in learning more or getting involved? Explore the links below to learn more about PPAL, their services, and upcoming opportunities to support their work and connect with the Providers' Council.

Providers' Council

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