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THE PROVIDER

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'Reverse Rally' recognizes TCF

Dozens of elected officials from across the Commonwealth took part in The Caring Force's "Reverse Rally" on Thursday, April 16 to thank community-based human services workers for their tireless efforts serving state residents in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. More than 35 legislators - including Congressman Joe Kennedy III, Senate President Karen Spilka and Speaker of the House Robert DeLeo - posted using the hashtag #TCFReverseRally to share videos, posts and tweets that thanked dedicated care-

givers who fill more than 180,000 jobs in the state's community-based human services sector. The rally garnered nearly 5,500 total impressions on Facebook and more than 60,000 on Twitter. The Caring Force, a grassroots advocacy initiative with more than 28,000 members across the Commonwealth, had planned to hold its Ninth Annual Human Services Rally and Lobby Day at the State House in Boston. But due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in-person events are cancelled. *RALLY, see page 7*

State adds \$44m more to human services funding

Dollars to be used for staffing, infection control, PPE and more

Dedicated community-based human services workers received positive news in late April as EOHHS pledged to invest an additional \$44 million in the sector to help organizations provide premium pay during the COVID-19 pandemic. At an April 27 press conference, Sudders thanked community-based providers and membership associations, specifically naming the Providers' Council, members of The Collaborative and other organizations "for their strong collaboration with us. ... Together, we are committed to safety." "This \$44 million is specifically to address unplanned for and thus unbudgeted services and items in response to the pandemic, such as increased staffing, overtime and staffing-related costs; infection control; and personal protective equipment supplies," Sudders said. "This money, in addition to the first phase of \$95 million that we announced on March 30, brings the total additional support for residential programs and some other purchase-of-service to \$139 million during the COVID-19 public health crisis." Sudders noted the state would seek reimbursement from the federal gov-

ernment for up to \$105 million of the costs. She noted the funding was critical as EOHHS agencies work with 238 residential service providers throughout the state to ensure the health and wellbeing of 20,500 individuals. The state will take the average amounts providers billed for in December, January and February; they will receive 110 percent of that amount for March and April, and after the April 27 announcement, they will receive 125 percent of that amount for May and June. "We are immensely grateful to Governor Baker, HHS Secretary Sudders and HHS leadership for ensuring further investment in the community-based human services sector during this difficult time," said Providers' Council President & CEO Michael Weekes. "Our direct care staff are our state's other first responders, and the essential work they are doing to serve clients and consumers on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic is truly inspiring." The state acted after a letter from The Collaborative in mid-April urged the administration to consider additional funding in the human services sector for direct care workers' pay, ad-

FUNDING, see page 7

More federal relief aid in sight

Congress is expected to convene in early May to draft the next stimulus bill, expected to boost relief already laid out in March's \$2 trillion CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security) Act. The most recent installment of federal money relief came in late April to fund small business payroll loan programs and grant programs, as well as \$100 billion for health care - with \$75 billion going to hospitals and another \$25 billion earmarked to boost testing for the virus, a key step in being to re-open state economies. In response to criticism of the small business loan distribution process, U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven T. Mnuchin said that changes were being made to the Paycheck Pro-

tection Program (PPP), which was meant to support millions of small businesses. Many complained that large, publicly traded companies secured funding and depleted the program. "To further ensure PPP loans are limited to eligible borrowers, the SBA has decided, in consultation with the Department of the Treasury, that it will review all loans in excess of \$2 million, in addition to other loans as appropriate, following the lender's submission of the borrower's loan forgiveness application," Mnuchin said. "We remain fully committed to ensuring that America's workers and small businesses get the resources they need to get through this challenging time."



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- Other _____

PROVIDERS' NEWS AND NOTES

New Homes for Families CEO

Homes for Families Board of Directors announced the appointment of Nicole Stewart as its new chief executive officer.

Stewart most recently served as the program director for Bridge Home at St. Mary's Center for Women and Children. A distinguished community leader, Stewart was selected to participate in Boston's premier career leadership program, LeadBoston. She also served on Memorial Spaulding Elementary School Council and has facilitated multicultural and anti-racism classes for numerous community education programs.



Nicole Stewart

"We are fortunate to have someone of Nicole Stewart's caliber and experience join the HFF team. We are at a critical moment in our nation's history, and we are looking forward to her renewed leadership to successfully implement Homes for Families' mission of uniting families impacted by homelessness, policy makers, and providers to address the root causes of family homelessness in Massachusetts," the HFF board said in a statement.

ANCOR Selected Cadavid as Massachusetts DSP of the Year

The American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR) recently selected Julian Cadavid as the recipient of its Massachusetts Direct Support Professional (DSP) of the Year Award. Cadavid is currently employed by **WCI - Work, Community, Independence**.



Julian Cadavid

This prestigious award is given an-

nually to one outstanding individual who works to support people with intellectual, developmental and other significant disabilities to live and thrive in the community. He is a leader among peers for his work supporting people with disabilities, helping them to live meaningful and productive lives as part of their communities.

Foundation for MetroWest gives \$518,800 to area nonprofits

The Foundation for MetroWest, based in Natick, recently awarded \$518,800 to 100 area nonprofits that provided a wide range of services, including those related to the arts, career and employment training, education, immigrant services, historic preservation, literacy, nutrition, and other areas.

Several Providers' Council members were among the grantees, including **Advocates, Inc., Employment Options, Inc., Jewish Family & Children's Service, Key Program, MAB Community Services, Inc., Middlesex Human Service Agency, Inc., REACH Beyond Domestic Violence, South Middlesex Opportunity Council (SMOC), Thrive Support & Advocacy, and Wayside Youth & Family Support Network.**

Parenting Journey appoints new events and communication manager

Rachael Dubinsky has taken on a new position as events and communication manager at **Parenting Journey**, where she brings more than nine years of experience in communication and digital strategies, community organizing, fundraising and events management.

Dubinsky has a strong passion for social justice & empowering women. She most recently served as the director of development



Rachael Dubinsky

and communications strategy for the Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action and the director of political engagement for its 501(c)(4), JALSA Impact.

She also served as a field organizer for the New Hampshire Democratic Party, a senior digital strategies associate for The Hatcher Group and deputy press secretary at the U.S. Department of Agriculture. She holds a master's degree in strategic public relations from George Washington University and undergraduate degrees in agriculture and communications from the University of Delaware.

Rachel's Table launches partnership with local businesses

Rachel's Table in Springfield, a project of the **Jewish Federation of Western Massachusetts** that works to alleviate hunger and reduce food waste in western Massachusetts, recently announced that it has developed a new partnership.

Rachel's Table is teaming with Franklin County businesses, including BJs and Rise Above Bakery and area supermarkets, bakeries, restaurants, and caterers, supported by more than 200 volunteers, to deliver food to soup kitchens, pantries, after-school programs, senior living centers, and other agencies.

Welcome new Providers' Council member: Sojourner House

The Council would like to extend a warm welcome to our newest member: **Sojourner House of Boston.**

Founded in 1981, Sojourner House

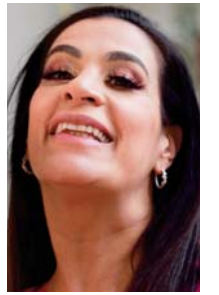
was the first family shelter in Boston to house parents of all genders, as well as children of all ages. Sojourner House is also one of a few shelters accessible to people with disabilities in Massachusetts, and it works closely with families to identify their unique barriers to securing housing, connecting them to community resources, parenting classes and financial literacy and employment workshops.

Sojourner House strives to empower families by not only providing them with permanent housing, but by preparing them to become self-sufficient. Sojourner House has developed and currently owns affordable properties in Dorchester, Roxbury and Milton, and operates a food pantry for the community-at-large.

Partners for Youth with Disabilities hosts free comedy night May 7

Need an excuse to laugh these days? **Partners for Youth with Disabilities** booked comedian Maysoon Zayid for a free, online comedy show May 7 from 7-8 p.m.

Zayid is an actress, comedian, writer and disability advocate. She brings her hilarious and informative show *If I Canan* online for one night only. She will share tales of growing up as a disabled multiple minority and her quest for superstardom. Learn more at www.pyd.org.



Maysoon Zayid

Council moves Certificate Program online; extends deadline to June 8



Students in the Providers' Council's Certificate in Nonprofit Human Services Management program with Clark University gather for end-of-year graduation ceremonies last summer. Both Suffolk and Clark are now holding the Certificate program online, and they will be able to do so in the fall if necessary. The Council has extended the application deadline until June 8.

Students in the Providers' Council's Certificate in Nonprofit Human Services Management Program have joined the ranks of those who are now learning entirely online in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. Professors at both Clark and Suffolk universities have been reaching students through videoconferencing platforms since mid-March.

There have not been interruptions to the curriculum. Students have the ability to see and hear from guest speakers, engage with peers and faculty members, and participate in group presentations with the online model. If necessary, both schools have the capacity to move courses online for the fall semester.

Since this past September, students in each cohort have dedicated one day each week to the certificate program, taking courses in everything from human resource management and program evaluation to financial management and alternative revenue strategies. Agencies sponsor their employees and pay tuition for the certificate. In return, students agree to stay with their organization for at least one year following graduation.

The Providers' Council has also moved the application for the certificate program online, and it can be found at www.providers.org. The deadline to apply has been extended to Monday, June 8. Please contact Eliza Adams at eadams@providers.org with any questions about the program or application.

Seven Hills distributes 350K masks



State Rep. Joseph McKenna and Seven Hills Staff - Kathee Jordan, EVP/CEO; Mike Kendrick, Director of Facilities; and Bill Stock, VP of Government and Community Relations - pose with masks that went to 125 organizations.

Staff at Seven Hills Foundation helped distribute nearly 350,000 medical masks to 125 other health and human services organizations throughout the state, many of them located in central Massachusetts.

The masks, shipped in a bulk order from China, were individually sorted and packaged by members of Seven Hills Foundation's senior leadership team.

State Representative Joseph McKenna of Webster helped SHF source the masks, and Kathee Jordan, executive vice president & CEO, initiated an outreach program to other organizations in the nonprofit community who had similar needs for N95 masks. More than 125 organizations joined the collaboration to purchase the masks with individual orders ranging from 50 to 50,000.

"Seven Hills Foundation was happy to be able to do it because we know so many of our fellow organizations desperately needed these masks to protect their staff and the individuals they support. In the midst of this public health crisis, it is imperative that we all work together and we are happy to help lead that effort," Jordan said.

SALUTING THE CARING FORCE

Charles River Center staff members continue provide hands-on care to clients and consumers during COVID-19 health crisis

Needham-based Charles River Center is made up of four divisions that provide family support and in-home support services, residential services, day habilitation, and employment and day services.

It is the residential programs, support to families and in-home supports that have remained fully operational during the COVID-19 health crisis thanks to the dedicated staff working in direct daily contact with the individuals we serve with developmental and intellectual disabilities and autism.

The staff in our 28 residential homes are working tirelessly every day. They, in addition to staff added from our day programs, have learned and adapted to new protocols, schedules and techniques, on top of existing requirements.

They are often called upon to assume new or different duties, and they have done so with amazing skill.

Focus on service

In addition, our staff clean and disinfect the homes, fully engage with the residents in fulfilling recreational and educational activities, communicate and cooperate with co-workers, and fol-



Staff from Charles River Center in Needham continue to provide high quality services to clients and consumers in their care during the recent pandemic. Family Support programs continue to be a crucial lifeline for nearly 400 local families, who receive on-site visits, and assistance obtaining food, medicine and other needs. (Photo credit: Charles River Center)

low important directions and updates from remote supervising staff. All their responsibilities revolve around keeping our persons served healthy, happy and safe.

Those in our Family Support program continue to be in contact with nearly 400 families to aid with food, personal items, virtual activities and resources.

They also schedule online workshops and trainings such as the recent Reducing Problem Behavior and Teaching Tolerating Skills for Children and Young Adults with Autism and Other Disabilities.

"It's genuinely an honor and a privilege to be a part of such a dedicated team and community that makes a difference in the lives of so many — and supports each other in the most challenging times."

— Anne-Marie Bajwa, President and CEO of Charles River Center



administration and the Board of Directors.

Meeting the supplies challenge

For example, the procurement of supplies has been a daunting task. Staff, with the help of community members, have been working tirelessly to obtain the needed supplies.

So far, we have been able to purchase and receive donations of supplies.

Family support

Within Family Support, the incredible front-line staff in our In-home Support program make frequent on-site visits into the private homes of persons served providing assistance as needed. That includes help with accessing various resources within their communities, obtaining needed services, medications, food and basic necessities.

Everyone at Charles River Center is involved in supporting the residential, family support and in-home support staff, from the Leadership Team to the

'Coming together'

President Anne-Marie Bajwa is struck by the overwhelmingly positive response of our staff to the new work conditions.

"We are all working together to manage this crisis; some in direct contact with individuals and others working behind the scenes, but we have all come together as we have before during difficult times. We know we will be able to navigate this challenge."

Would you like to salute your staff's hard work during the COVID-19 crisis in The Provider?

Contact Erica at the Council at erica@providers.org.

Volunteers of America MA begins program, honors staffer

VOAM launches new partnership



Volunteers of America Massachusetts president & CEO Charles Gagnon addresses Somerville Mayor Joseph Curtatone and others at a press conference.

Volunteers of America of Massachusetts (VOAM) partnered with the City of Somerville and two private organizations to increase access to health care management of formerly homeless veterans at its transitional living center.

This new partnership was announced during an April 27 press conference with Mayor Joseph Curtatone, who introduced the broad partnership between VOAM, Cherish Health, and Health eVillages.

Cherish Health, a Cambridge-based technology innovator that pioneers solutions to improve and enable health care using advanced sensors, with support from its non-profit partner eVillages, a global organization providing medical resources to low-resource settings, have joined to provide biosensor patches to the Mass Bay Veterans Center that serves 29 individuals.

Charles E. Gagnon, president & CEO of VOAM, praised the partnership.

"It certainly 'takes a village,' he said, "and this innovative collaboration and partnership with Mayor Curtatone, Cherish Health and Health eVillages is an ideal opportunity to improve the care for our veterans.

Volunteers of America of Massachusetts supports individuals and their families through an array of residential and outpatient services including Veterans Services, Residential Treatment Services, Re-Entry Services, Outpatient Behavioral Health, and Independent and Assisted Living Residencies.

Miller returns to work at VOAM

Her last words to Volunteers of America of Massachusetts were: "I'll be back."

Then, Mindy Miller left an organization for which she had true affection - with the idea she would return better prepared to lead.

Two years later, she received a phone call from then-Volunteers of America of Massachusetts' CEO. He asked her one simple question. "Ready to come back?"

Mindy Miller's odyssey that led her to become Volunteers of America of Massachusetts' Director of Outpatient Services follows a line of academic pursuit, professional aspirations and good timing.

Raised in Montana and Wyoming, and college educated in Colorado, Miller scoured nationally for potential Forensic Psychology graduate programs.

Miller earned her master's degree at Roger Williams University. A chance meeting with a former colleague brought Miller to Volunteers of America of Massachusetts.

Miller met with clients at the organization's clinics in Quincy and Taunton, while also supporting clients receiving services in residential treatment.

"There is something different about Volunteers of America," she said. "We're led by our mission."

Four years later, Miller mapped the next step, following her pattern of bold moves. She wanted to advance her skills and take on more leadership. This meant leaving her beloved VOA - but only temporarily.



Mindy Miller

She needed to grow elsewhere, but promised the goodbye was temporary. Two years later Miller returned as director of clinical services.

Under her leadership, Behavioral Health Services has grown, integrated electronic health records and improved access and efficiency to medication delivery.

Most importantly, the program has unified outpatient and residential behavioral health treatment. Today, Volunteers of America of Massachusetts operate 116 treatment beds across programming that includes residential treatment services, women's after care, and transitional housing services for veterans.

Not only has Miller overseen an expansion of behavioral health services - directly overseeing 22 licensed and licensed-eligible clinicians- she has also delivered a systemic approach to reinforcing evidence-based principles across all lines in the organization.

This includes leading trauma-informed workshops. Just last month, Miller oversaw the launch of telehealth services as part of Volunteers of America of Massachusetts Behavioral Health Services.

"Mindy's extraordinary ability to build of team of clinicians that understand the importance of addressing complex issues of an underserved population.

She has an excellent track record for delivering spectacular results with compassion," states Roberto Moran, Volunteers of America of Massachusetts COO.



Michael Weekes
President / Publisher

Our new heroes and sheroes

The worst pandemic in our lifetime has destroyed many lives, businesses, aspirations and opportunities. However, the strength of the human spirit and resiliency of mission is ever present in the staff of our community human services sector.

They are on the front line of defense and support with hundreds of direct care workers that are, in our view, earned the distinction as our heroes and sheroes.

In MetroWest, Advocates is a multiservice human service organization with nearly 1,400 employees and supporting 30,000 people. Its leader, Diane Gould, knew she had a great staff supporting programs from Worcester to Roxbury, but she was almost speechless in describing their bravery. She said some of her staff were “willing to do whatever it takes to support people.”

“Katima” is a staffer who recognized that a person in their IDD program who tested positive, would refuse to be separated from her or go to another residence for isolation. So Katima, with limited PPE, left her family to self-quarantine in a hotel room, providing 24/7 care for nearly three weeks. They both made it through, and both are back in the program.

But its not always a happy story: at first, staff could not get gowns and had to use garbage bags. In fact, one female staff person at Advocates has died from the virus. Yet, despite this tragic loss, her colleagues continue to fulfil Advocates’ mission

Children’s Services of Roxbury is responsible for 1,000 people receiving safe and accessible housing services statewide. CEO Sandra McCroom will tell you that their mission is “to bring peace of mind to children and families across Massachusetts.”

Social distancing is tough when you’re bringing furniture, household supplies and food to families in need. Some staff have volunteered to stay in these environments knowing that not all have been tested or have appropriate PPE. Sometimes it means having therapy sessions with telehealth or on a front porch or having an intervention literally on the street. It takes courage to step up.

In Franklin, Mike Moloney the transitioning CEO at HMEA, has plenty of stories of heroism too. Mike is also overwhelmed with the incredible service his staff of nearly 700 are doing daily.

HMEA needed to stand up a couple of isolation centers to handle the growing number of people in care. However, “Sam,” a congregate care resident of HMEA for over 20 years, tested positive and refused to

go in a isolation center and leave the worker he trusted. In fact, he was petrified with fear about wearing a face mask.

But a direct support professional and member of The Caring Force, John, volunteered to stay with Sam seven-days-straight on 12-hour days with nursing support.

Speaking of nursing support, HMEA has a couple of nurses that are doing whatever it takes to meet the medical needs of consumers without hospitalization.

These nurses, assigned to 24 group homes, know that hospitals, overwhelmed with those infected, are even less prepared to address the everyday needs of their residents. They are managing G-tubes, tracheal tubes, oxygen and more to keep them well or get them medically better.

They could have left like other medical personnel to a medical facility that was well-equipped with the latest medical equipment and collegial support, but that would be a loss of tremendous magnitude to those in 24 homes. They are also our frontline heroes.

Not all our front-line heroes and sheroes are in residential care. Some are at the Amherst Survival Center. If there is a good barometer of a community’s health it’s places where community residents come for a nutritious meal, check into a free clinic, get needed clothing, take a hot shower, and learn how to access SNAP and other community needs.

Executive Director Lev Ben-Ezra said after the outbreak hit, they lost most of their volunteers, who were older residents and had to protect themselves and college students that returned home.

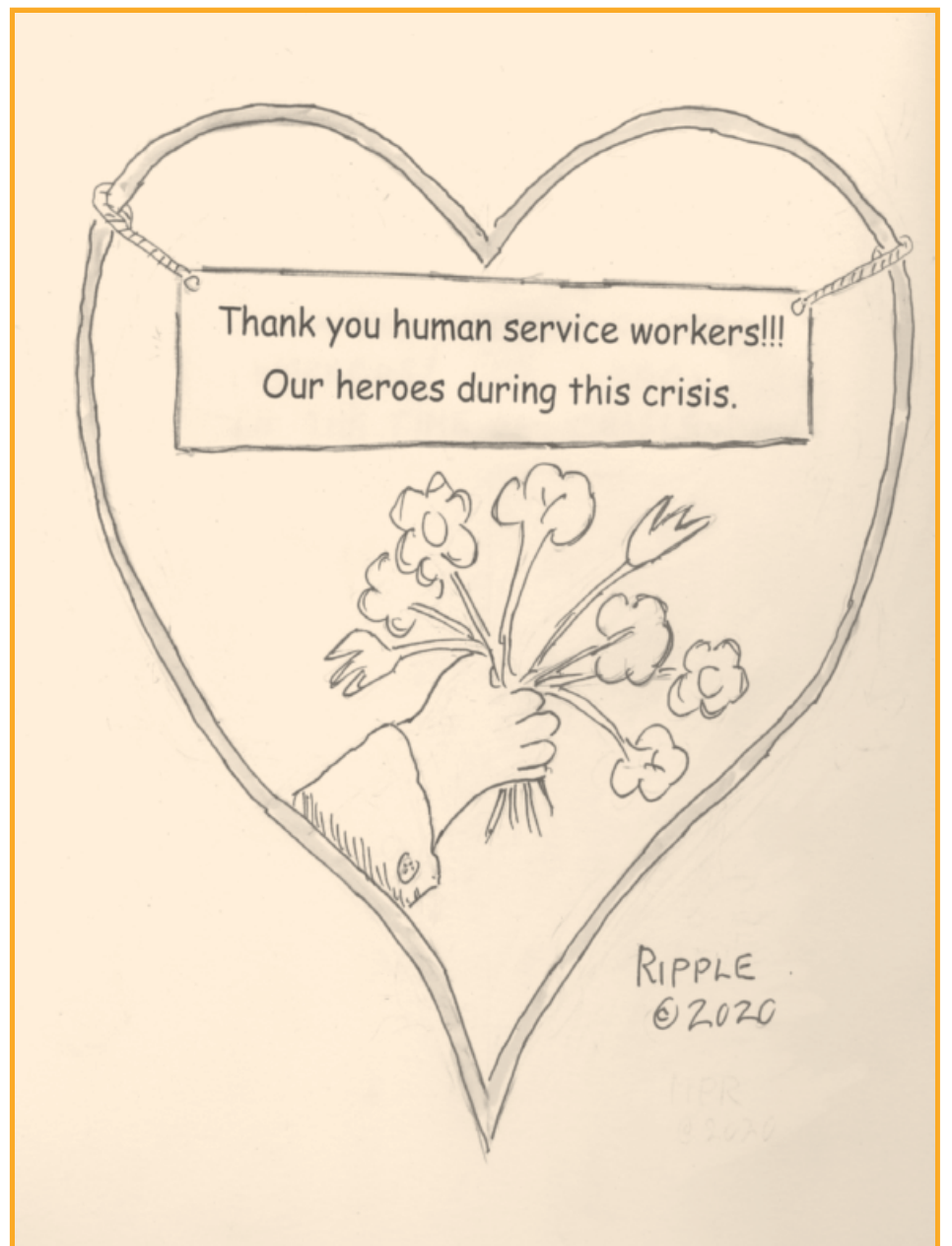
Next, they had to close their sit-down community meals and the walk-in clinic, and lastly, the number of people seeking food is ramping up to near doubling from 100 to 200 daily.

Now meals and food are packed to go from a tent outside and are doing more personal car use deliveries as public transportation has been reduced. At the same time, they are feeding more children who are not getting school meals.

Ben-Ezra has seen the community step up but needs more financial donations to support efforts of their “Truly phenomenal super volunteers” that are making the difference on the front lines with heroism.

These are but a handful of stories among 180,000 human services jobs that are destined to advance a new normal that we are all in it together.

Please thank some of our new heroes and sheroes.



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Have a topic that would make a good subject for
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**Let Erica know: 508.599.2245
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Celebrating foster care heroes

By Shaheer Mustafa

Every year in this country, approximately 500,000 children experience the foster care system. Through no fault of their own, these children have encountered significant abuse and neglect at a time when they need a safe place to grow and thrive.

For those of us who are fortunate enough to have avoided foster care, it is easy to take the importance of a safe and loving home for granted. Children need the freedom afforded by stable, nurturing home environments to develop effectively. However, for too many kids, safety is a privilege.

HopeWell is a provider of foster care throughout Massachusetts and Connecticut. We recruit, train and support some of the most amazing people you could ever meet – people who not only open their hearts, but also their homes to welcome and support kids in need of refuge. We know the impact of loss, trauma and disruption that kids in foster care face. And whether it is helping them with their homework, reading them a bedtime story at night or supporting their grief, kids in foster care deserve the same supports as their non-foster peers.

May is National Foster Care Month – a time to acknowledge the American children and teens in foster care and their family members, foster parents, volunteers, mentors, child welfare professionals and policymakers who work tirelessly to help them find permanent homes and connections. At HopeWell, our 300 foster homes support more than 1,000 children each year.

Every May, along with our peer organizations across the country, we celebrate the generous families who ensure foster care is a robust component of the child welfare continuum.

We celebrate people like Joan Phillips, a foster parent from Pittsfield,

who has supported more than 40 youth in foster care over the past 20 years. She works specifically with teens in foster care, some of the most challenging youth to identify placements for. She has a gift for connecting with and sticking by them, even if they push her away. One youth she worked with was hospitalized six times; each time, she welcomed her back and supported her along her journey to recovery.

We celebrate people like Kathy and Kevin Candage, who have provided foster and respite care for more than 100 young people and provided permanency for four others through adoption and guardianship.

For those of us in this kind of work, we have our “go-to” families who we know will bail us out of the most dire situations. The Candages are that family. They take on every situation with a positive attitude and open heart. They also understand the importance of connection with families of origin. They recognize their love and support can never replace the bond children have with birth parents and so they do everything they can to preserve connections and support youth during their most vulnerable time.

There are thousands of stories like this that we can all share. Heroes who quietly do incredible work on behalf of kids and families. They do it without recognition or fanfare. They do it with humility and passion. They inspire me with their commitment and dedication. They represent the best of who we are. And now, more than ever, we need to acknowledge them for their service and celebrate them for all they do in support of kids and families.

Shaheer Mustafa, MSW, is the president & CEO of Dedham-based HopeWell, one of New England's leading providers of intensive foster care services.

COVID-19: The Great Revealer

By Imari Paris Jeffries

COVID-19 isn't “the great equalizer” but it is “the great revealer.”

Women, immigrants and people of color are being hardest hit by this disease, and are also the most likely to be on the front lines fighting it.

Our human service workers are being hailed as essential and “heroes,” yet they are among the most likely to lack access to the health and economic resources they need to survive. Many frontline staff are the lowest paid in their agencies and, sadly, among the last to have their work recognized with hazard pay during these extraordinary times.

According to the New York Times, one in three jobs held by women has been designated as essential and non-white women are even more likely to be doing essential jobs. And yet, these high-risk workers are the most likely to be underpaid and undervalued.

In the Boston-area, white households have a median wealth of \$247,500, while many communities of color have a median wealth of around \$8, according to the Federal Reserve of Boston.

To make matters worse, the average American has less than \$400 in savings, which means that even a month of unemployment can drive a person, let alone a family, into financial ruin.

If we are going to stop income inequality in its tracks, we must create a reality in which all families have the resources they need to weather any crisis, especially our essential frontline workers.

And we know poor health outcomes are directly tied to our broken economic system.

Historically racist policies, like redlining and segregation, combined with housing discrimination, higher poverty rates, educational disparities, employment barriers and mass incarceration have created persistent inequities in our communities of color for decades and has illuminated the public health crisis of systemic racism.

The families with whom Parenting

Journey partners are making difficult decisions every day, deciding whether to pay their electric bill or put food on the table due to massive layoffs and work closures.

As a community that is known for putting the needs of others ahead of ourselves, we need to ask: how can we create an equitable future for our workers? We need to set the example and put on our own metaphorical masks before we can truly assist others.

This pandemic has shown us that we have the capacity to guarantee healthcare, food and shelter to everyone, and that is the future we can all work together to create. The question we must ask is: do we have the will beyond the pandemic?

We applaud Governor Charlie Baker and the legislature for putting a moratorium on evictions and foreclosures, waiving the one-week waiting period for unemployment benefits, and making sure no one's utilities are shut off.

But, these policies shouldn't just be a priority during a pandemic.

This is our chance to address the racial wealth gap and build more equitable systems in our society.

As community and non-profit leaders, we must seize this policy window and go further to protect our families. We need to center historically marginalized people in the decision-making process for how our organizations are responding to and rebuilding after this crisis.

We also must ensure that minority-owned businesses are being put at the front of the pack when it comes to receiving federal funds, like Paycheck Protection Program loans, to help their businesses stay afloat.

We'll get through this public health emergency, but it's up to us to decide what the future looks like when we do.

Imari Paris Jeffries is the Executive Director of Parenting Journey in Somerville, Mass., Providers' Council board member and a member of the equity and diversity committee, and a member of the Governor's Black Advisory Commission.

Emergency legislation allows for temporary governance flexibility

By Anita Lichtblau

If you have been tearing your hair out trying to figure out how to hold annual members' and board meetings, elect directors and officers, approve budgets, and carry out normal governance functions in the age of social distancing, bans on meetings of 10 or more people, and closed offices, not to mention compliance with your bylaws and state law, (some) help is here!

Effective April 3, 2020, emergency legislation, found at Section 16 of Chapter 53 of the Acts of 2020, permits corporations created under the Massachusetts nonprofit statute to adapt their governance practices to the unique challenges posed by the COVID-19 crisis.

One of the key issues the emergency provisions are intended to address is the difficulty some nonprofits face during the crisis in holding members' meetings and consequently obtaining members' votes on necessary actions such as the election of direc-

tors or approval of budgets.

Some nonprofits' bylaws prohibit proxy voting by members and the state nonprofit statute does not permit members to meet remotely. The emergency provisions now resolve that problem by permitting members to meet remotely and vote by proxy, unless prohibited by the nonprofit's articles of organization. The provisions will be effective for the duration of the Governor's March 10, 2020 state of emergency and for 60 days thereafter.

Here's what your nonprofit board may temporarily do, so long as it doesn't conflict with the articles of organization: (Note: If a nonprofit corporation with members takes any of the actions below, it must notify its members as soon as reasonably practicable.)

Members' meetings:

- 1) Cancel a members' meeting, with notice of the cancellation given in any practicable manner;
- 2) Allow members to vote at a members' meeting in per-

son or by proxy; any member voting by proxy is considered present for purpose of any quorum requirement; and

- 3) Allow members to participate remotely (such as by phone or videoconference) and count as being present at the meeting, so long as:

- a) reasonable measures are implemented to verify that each person deemed present and permitted to vote at the meeting remotely is a member or proxyholder;

- b) reasonable measures are implemented to provide such members and proxyholders a reasonable opportunity to participate in the meeting and to vote on matters submitted to the members, including an opportunity to read or hear the proceedings of the meeting substantially concurrently with the proceedings, pose questions and make comments, regardless of whether the members can simultaneously communicate with each other during the meeting; and

- c) if any member or proxyholder votes or takes other action at the meeting by

means of remote communication, a record of the vote or other action is maintained.

Directors' Meetings:

- 1) Provide notice of the meeting only to those directors it is practicable to reach and in any practicable manner; and

- 2) Allow a director to participate in a board meeting by, or conduct the meeting through the use of, any means of communication by which all directors participating are able to simultaneously communicate with each other during the meeting.

Directors who participate in a board meeting under these emergency legislation rules automatically constitute a quorum, regardless of the quorum required by the bylaws or otherwise.

Take Certain Actions:

- 1) Permit directors or officers to continue to serve during the governor's March 10, 2020 state of emergency and until the director's or officer's successor is elected, appointed or designated, despite the ex-

piration of his or her term of office;

- 2) Appoint successors to any of the officers, directors, employees or agents; and

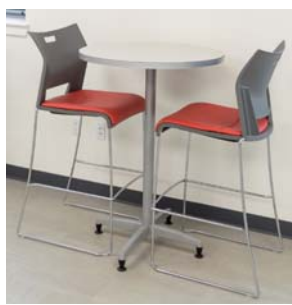
- 3) Relocate the principal office and designate alternative offices.

Anita Lichtblau is Legal Counsel to the Providers' Council and a partner in the nonprofit practice group at the Boston law firm of Casner & Edwards, LLP. She is the immediate past Co-Chair of the Tax-Exempt Organizations Section of the Boston Bar Association and current co-chair of the Section's Chapter 180 Working Group, which is working on modernizing Chapter 180. She was also involved in drafting this emergency legislation.

Should Council members need assistance or have any questions concerning these emergency provisions, Anita can be reached at lichtblau@casneredwards.com.



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A VIEW FROM THE HILL

A commentary from a legislator on human services



Higher education access for all

By Rep. Sean Garballey

Almost 50 years ago, Massachusetts led the nation, enacting legislation opening our schoolhouse doors to children with disabilities. However, despite significant progress, major obstacles still limit opportunities for young adults with disabilities.

New legislation proposed by Rep. Patricia Haddad and I intends to remove barriers and provide opportunities for individuals with intellectual disabilities, autism and other developmental disabilities to participate in college as non-degree-seeking students to gain the skills needed to live and work in the community as tax-paying members of our society.

Supporting persons with disabilities has been a longtime priority of my office, and throughout my time in the Legislature, I have worked closely with others to forward equality and future life opportunities for persons with disabilities.

This term, Rep. Haddad and I worked closely to formulate H.1218 An Act creating higher education opportunities for students with intellectual disabilities, autism, and other developmental disabilities who have exited special education and H.1219 An Act creating higher education opportunities for students with intellectual disabilities, autism, and other developmental disabilities.

This legislation reflects the proven success of discretionary grant programs in Massachusetts and the rest of the country that have supported individuals with intellectual disabilities in college as non-degree-seeking students, providing students with the services and assistance they need to be successful.

By eliminating barriers and providing supports, these students gain the academic, independent living, social and employment skills necessary to succeed. National research has shown that adults with intellectual disabilities are three times more likely to find paid employment after participating in college.

More than 60 percent of adults with intellectual disabilities who attended college had a paid job after exit, compared to an employment rate of 19 percent in the general population.

The goal of the legislation is to provide students the opportunity to be included with their non-disabled peers in our state colleges and universities.

The legislation would allow individuals with intellectual disabilities to participate fully in campus life without meeting admission requirements required for degree-seeking students.

The legislation allows existing

state and federal funding for individuals with disabilities to be used to support students in college, to the extent public funding is available. Parents can also choose to pay privately, including utilization of tax-free savings plans for individuals with disabilities that are similar to 529 college savings plans. Public institutions of higher education can create their own guidelines for participation of students, reflecting the culture of the campus.

Working together to promote and advance legislation that creates equal opportunities for persons with disabilities should be expected from the legislature. Helping foster an environment of acceptance and involvement would positively impact not just the lives of persons with disabilities — experience has shown that inclusion greatly enhances learning opportunities for all students on the campus.

Moreover, research indicates participation in college is cost-effective: Individuals with intellectual disabilities who attend college have decreased reliance on public benefits such as SSI, and reduced expenditures for state disability and health care services.

If we fail to enact this legislation, too many individuals with intellectual disabilities and autism will continue to face discrimination and lowered expectations, often spending their days in segregated classrooms and day habilitation programs, with dependence on government subsidies and support for much of their adult lives.

People with intellectual disabilities and autism have among the lowest rates of employment of all people with disabilities, which will persist without inclusive opportunities to continue with their peers on pathways to post-secondary education and employment.

Currently both H.1218 and H.1219 are part of a larger bill – H.4419 An Act creating higher education opportunities for students with intellectual disabilities, autism and other developmental disabilities, which has been referred to the House Committee on Ways and Means.

It is my goal to ensure the passage of this legislation by working with my fellow colleagues. This is the right thing to do for individuals with disabilities — and for our entire society.

Rep. Sean Garballey, of Arlington, represents the 23rd Middlesex District.



Rep. Sean Garballey

The opinions expressed in A View from the Hill and Viewpoints from Across the State are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views or opinions of the Providers' Council or its members.

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RALLY: Legislators thank workers

Continued from Page 1

celebrated and those in the human services sector are working long hours to provide critical care to one-in-ten Massachusetts residents.

Caring Force members instead asked legislators to participate in a "Reverse Rally," recognizing the efforts of workers often referred to as the state's other first responders. Many legislators sent tweets, posted on Facebook or recorded videos to thank Caring Force members for their incredible efforts in serving vulnerable residents.

"The surge is upon us. It's more important than ever before to take this moment to thank you for all that you do for our most vulnerable residents," Spilka said in a video. "You are willing to take care of and support the residents of group homes across the Commonwealth. I know how hard you work."

"It's selfless, courageous work, and it's that kind of commitment to each other that we're going to need to lift us through these trying times," Kennedy added in his video. "Please join me in thanking them for their work and their service. Our Commonwealth is grateful."

Others participating in the Reverse Rally included Sens. Harriette Chan-

dlar, Sonia Chang-Diaz, Jo Comerford, Julian Cyr, Sal DiDomenico, Ryan Fattman, Cindy Friedman, Anne Gobi, John Keenan, Eric Lesser, Joan Lovely, Mike Moore, Patrick O'Connor, Michael Rodrigues and Walter Timilty, and State Reps. Christine Barber, David Biele, Natalie Blais, Mindy Domb, Shawn Dooley, Carolyn Dykema, Carole Fiola, Patricia Haddad, Stephan Hay, Natalie Higgins, Hannah Kane, Kay Khan, David Linsky, David LeBoeuf, Kate Lipper-Garabedian, Joe McKenna, Jeff Roy and Lindsay Sabadosa.

Providers' Council President and CEO Michael Weekes expressed his appreciation to legislators that took time out of their day to recognize the community-based human services workers who are working tirelessly to help the state's most vulnerable residents.

"Our direct care workers in the human services sector are truly our other first responders, and their selfless acts of courage amid this crisis are making a difference in the lives of tens of thousands throughout this Commonwealth," Weekes said. "We thank the elected officials who reached out to thank them for their efforts to preserve caring communities in Massachusetts."

FUNDING: Extra state dollars for human services sector total \$139m

Continued from Page 1

ditional access to testing and more money for PPE.

The additional funding will be a boost for direct care workers at community-based human services organizations throughout the state. Providers' Council members noted the additional funding helped reduce the wage gap between community-based staff and their state counterparts doing similar work. In mid-April, the state announced it would give premium pay to state human services workers.

Road to Responsibility (RTR) President and CEO Chris White said it was difficult in mid-April to explain to his staff that the pay increase for state workers wouldn't also apply to RTR workers. The increase announced April 27 will allow for additional funding to also go to community-based workers. "I am so proud and grateful for our staff - I can't say enough about them," White said. "This is the time for pay equity."

May Institute President and CEO Lauren Solotar, Advocates President and CEO Diane Gould and NEEDS

CEO Jim Sperry all noted it was difficult to explain to staff that they would not receive the initial increase promise to only state workers. Sperry noted he believed all human services workers deserved the increase, whether they work for the Commonwealth or a community-based agency.

"I would tell the state, 'Thank you for what you did for the state workers, that was well deserved. I am just asking that you do the exact same for our folks,'" Sperry said. "They are accepting the same levels of risk, working just as hard, and their lives are just as valuable."

Gould added: "Nobody is saying the state workers don't deserve this - of course they do. We just want our people to be treated the same way."

State contractual reimbursements that promote pay equity and adequate staff wages in the provider sector has historically been at the cornerstone of the Providers' Council's legislative agenda.



Council members can post an unlimited number of jobs for free on **Jobs with Heart**, the Council's human services jobs board.

Visit providers.org/jobs today to learn more!

Important 2020 election dates

Wednesday, August 12: Last day to register for the Sept. 1 State Primary

Tuesday, September 1: State Primary in MA

Wednesday, October 14: Last day to register for the Nov. 3 General Election

Tuesday, November 3: General Election in MA



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CALENDAR OF EVENTS • SPRING 2020

What: Annual Membership & Business Meeting
When: Wednesday, May 6
Time: 10:30 am. to 11:30 a.m.
Where: via Zoom (reservations required)
Cost: Free, members-only
To register: Contact Christina Broughton at cbroughton@providers.org.

Please note: In order to ensure all members are able to participate we are limiting registration to two representatives per agency. A recording of the meeting will be available following the event. Please remember that we will not be voting during this event as votes were submitted prior through the 2020 Proxy Form.

What: Budgeting Basics
When: Tuesday, May 19
Time: 10 a.m. to noon
Where: via Zoom (reservations required)
Cost: Members \$50; Non-members \$115
Presenter: Anne Meyerson, former Executive Director of Education and Training, YMCA of Greater Boston
To register: Visit <https://cloud4good.tfaforms.net/388755>

Please note: Participants will need access to Microsoft Excel during this session. They should also have some prior experience working with Excel.

Pre-registration for these events required unless otherwise noted.

Visit www.provider.org/events to learn more and register. Questions? Contact Eliza Adams at 508.598.9700 or eadams@providers.org



The Census impacts:

Funding

- More than \$20 billion in federal dollars for Massachusetts, including funding for transportation and programs like Medicaid, Head Start and Section 8 Housing

Representation

- How many congresspersons that Massachusetts will have advocating for human services interests in the U.S. House of Representatives

Growth

- Businesses' plans to invest in communities, build offices, open stores and bring jobs to areas, as they search for strong population centers

For more on how to respond – including in other languages – visit www.2020census.gov/en/ways-to-respond.html

How to respond:

Online

- Visit www.my2020census.gov to respond online

Phone

- Call 844.330.2020 (English) or 844.468.2020 (Spanish) from 7 a.m. to 2 a.m. Eastern Time

Mail

- A paper questionnaire will arrive in the mail

Federal law requires the U.S. Census Bureau to keep individual information confidential



More info: www.providers.org/census



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