



**Parent/Professional
Advocacy League, Inc.**

The Inside Track

*Pam Sager, Executive Director
Pamela Bows, Policy Coordinator*

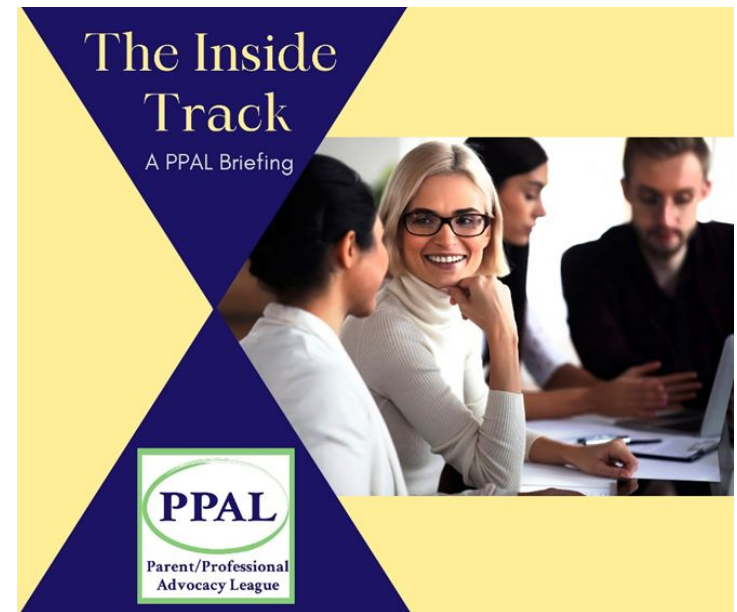


Parent/Professional Advocacy League Training
1/27/2026

Welcome to the Inside Track



- Confidentiality
- Bi-monthly meeting focused on policy, updates and networking
- Knowledge is power– and impact
- PPAL believes that families should have access to all information that affects them, and be able to provide feedback
- You will get a link to the slides and resources within the week that we only share with participants. You can see the meetings prior to check in on policy changes and/or things coming!



Funded by the Klarman Family Foundation

Parent/Professional Advocacy League (PPAL)



A statewide, grassroots, family- run organization in Massachusetts.

PPAL's goal is to promote opportunities for families to become leaders and to ensure that the perspective of families is present in all conversations about children and youth.

Family organizations are an important strategy for boosting family participation, supporting and sustaining family voice (Lazear & Anderson, 2009)



Housekeeping



- Please introduce yourself in the chat – name and role (parent, family support) and where you're from



- Please keep yourself on mute - unless you are speaking - to reduce background noise



- Use the 'raise hand' or chat to let us know when you'd like to speak



- Please type questions into the chat box

Agenda



- **PPAL Workshops + Events**
- ***Hear from:* State Representative Meghan Kilcoyne, 12th Worcester District**
- **Legislative Advocacy Updates**
- **Budget Advocacy**
- **Department of Insurance (DOI) Listening Sessions**
- **PPAL's Town Hall with Department of Mental Health (DMH)**
- **Networking + Resource Sharing**

Question Of The Month

PPAL'S **January** Question of the Month

Are you raising a child or supporting a young adult
with behavioral health needs?
Are you working closely with someone who is?

**Has bullying or cyberbullying been part
of your child's experience?**



To Answer the Question, Please Visit
<https://ppal.net/question-of-the-month/>



QR Instructions:

1. Open the camera app on your cellphone
2. Position the QR code like you're going to photograph it.
3. Click the link that appears to go to the website

PPAL's February Question of the Month is about Respite:

At PPAL, we know that many parents and caregivers of children with mental health needs must be hypervigilant most of the time. It is exhausting, and doesn't leave time or energy for other things. What would help you or give you a break?

PPAL Parent Support Groups

JOIN US!!!!

Are you navigating the mental or behavioral health systems for a child, teen, or young adult?

Request 1:1 peer support!

We have NO waitlist!

MONDAY

Virtual: **Grupo de Apoyo Hispano**
10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Hybrid: **Parenting Young Adults - Looking to the Future**
5:00 PM - 6:30 PM
(Gardner)

TUESDAY

Hybrid: **Caregiver Connections**
5:00 PM - 6:30 PM
(Winchendon)



WEDNESDAY

Virtual: **Relax & Connect**
11:30 AM - 1:00 PM

In Person: **Caregiver Connections**
2nd Wednesdays
12:30 - 2:00 pm

4th Wednesdays
6:30 - 8:00 PM
(Westborough)
[Directions to PPAL office](#)

Virtual: **Parent Connections**
6:00 PM - 7:30 PM

THURSDAY

Virtual: **Grandparents Lunch and Learn**
2nd Thursdays
12:00 - 2:00 PM

4th Thursdays
6:30 - 8:00 PM

Virtual: **Empowered Caregiver Connections**
6:00 - 7:30 PM

FRIDAY

Virtual: **Parenting Power UP**
12:00 PM - 1:30 PM

Do you need help navigating and advocating in the school system for a loved one with mental or behavioral health needs?

School Problem Solving Clinic
Make An Appointment!
PPALSchoolClinic@ppal.net

Upcoming Statewide Topics:



- **February 10:** Insurance and Advocacy, with Amy Weinstock and Terri Farrell
- **March 10:** Town Hall with MassHealth
- **April 14:** Caregiving in Difficult Times, with Dr. Gayl Swaby
- **May 9:** CyberBullying and Bullying
- **June 12:** LGBTQ /Acceptance and the basics, with Oscar Oliveira Soens, Safe Homes Program Director

Off in July 2026

PPAL Is Your Community

Our Lived Experience Means We Understand!



- We support ALL families, regardless of immigration status.
- We support ALL LGBTQIA+ youth and parents.

We have staff with lived experience in these and other important areas.

IMPORTANT: we don't take insurance— support from PPAL is completely free.

If you're looking for support for your child, youth, or young adult's mental health, please reach out to PPAL:

866-815-8122

info@PPAL.net

State Representative Meghan Kilcoyne

12th Worcester District



Representative Meghan Kilcoyne proudly serves the 12th Worcester District in the Massachusetts House of Representatives, representing the towns of Berlin, Boylston, Clinton, Lancaster, Sterling, and Precinct 4 of Northborough. She is a graduate of Stonehill College where she earned her degree in History, and Suffolk University Law School where she earned her J.D.

Representative Kilcoyne began her career in public service working for her predecessor, Representative Harold Naughton, gaining over a decade of legislative experience before running for office herself. In 2020, she made history as the first woman elected to represent the 12th Worcester District.

She currently serves as the House Vice Chair of the Joint Committee on Health Care Financing, where she helps lead efforts to ensure the accessibility, affordability, and fiscal sustainability of the Commonwealth's health care system. She has taken a particular interest in expanding access to biomarker testing, which holds promise for earlier and more precise diagnosis and treatment of numerous conditions, like cancer and Alzheimer's.

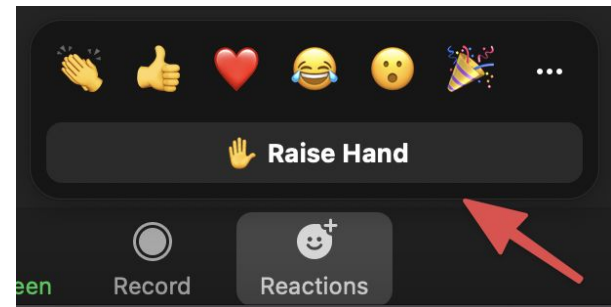
Her broader legislative priorities include increasing access to affordable and supportive housing, improving public safety, enhancing community health resources, advancing protections for animals, and supporting veterans and their families.

Discussion:

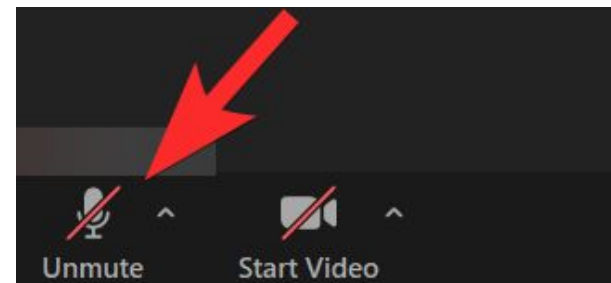
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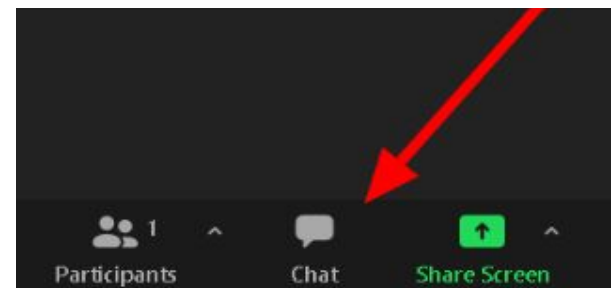
Use the Raise Hand feature



Unmute



Type questions into the chat box



2026 Legislative Advocacy

Where are we in the Legislative process?

This is the second year of the legislative session

Bills were filed in 2025 and the process will end at the end of this year (2026)

What Has Happened

- All Legislation filed by the third Friday in January- 2025
- Bills are assigned to Joint Committees– specific topic groups that hear bills based on theme.
- Made up of House & Senate members
- The legislature has heard the public’s input on bills

What Will Happen Next:

- Deadline to report on bills: 1st Wednesday in February
- Either “Ought to pass,” “ought not to pass,” or “study order.”
- **Advocate with your State Senators and Representatives!!**
 - Find your state reps here: <https://malegislature.gov/Search/FindMyLegislator>

Legislative Advocacy

Updates

S.141 / H.265 An act regarding families and children in need of assistance

Filed by Senator Kennedy and Representative Mendes

<https://childrensmentalhealthcampaign.org/wp-content/uploads/S141factsheet.pdf>

12/22/25 Bill reported favorably by committee and referred to the committee on Senate Ways and Means

This bill will update the Child Requiring Assistance (CRA) process by:

- **Require schools to refer students to FRCs** no fewer than 45 business days prior to CRA filing
- **Require schools to obtain an attestation from the FRC indicating that the family has been referred for services**, and that community based resources have been exhausted
- Require the Office of the Child Advocate (OCA) to prepare **educational materials about community-based alternatives to filing a CRA** and the potential adverse outcomes of becoming involved in state systems and make this publicly available on the CRA section of the website for the juvenile court.
- **Require that all individuals filing a CRA petition attest to having watched the video prior to filing a CRA petition.**

Legislative Advocacy

Updates

**S.1394 / H.2193 An Act ensuring efficient & effective implementation of the Roadmap for Behavioral Health Reform
Filed by Senator Cyr & Representatives Barber & Rogers**

<https://childrensmentalhealthcampaign.org/wp-content/uploads/H2193factsheet.pdf>

1/12/26 Bill reported favorably by committee and referred to the committee on Health Care Financing

The bill outlines responsibilities and creates an urgency with the EOHHS – the office of the Secretary – to ensure effective and efficient implementation of the Roadmap.

This includes:

- Developing and **implementing** comprehensive, biennial strategic plans
- **Ensuring coordination** and aligning processes and procedures across all EOHHS agencies
- Planning and implementing **campaigns to raise awareness** about the Roadmap
- **Gathering feedback** about the Roadmap
- Creating and making public a **central data dashboard**
- Overseeing, in partnership with the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security, behavioral health crisis response planning and implementation

Requires the Health Policy Commission to report on challenges and opportunities associated with the financial stability and sustainability of Roadmap services, and identify legislative, regulatory, or operational factors that would lead to improvements.

Legislative Advocacy

Updates

H.1131 / S.773 An Act expanding access to mental health services

Filed by Senator Keenan & Representative Decker

<https://childrensmentalhealthcampaign.org/wp-content/uploads/H1131factsheet-1.pdf>

1/12/26 Bill reported favorably by committee and referred to the committee on Health Care Financing

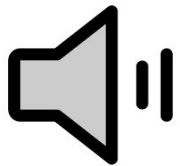
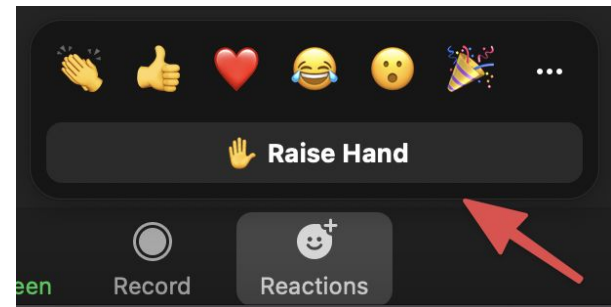
This comprehensive legislation builds on Chapter 177 of the Acts of 2022 to expand access to mental health services across Massachusetts by **increasing insurance coverage, removing prior authorization requirements, expanding provider eligibility, and improving emergency psychiatric care.**

Discussion:

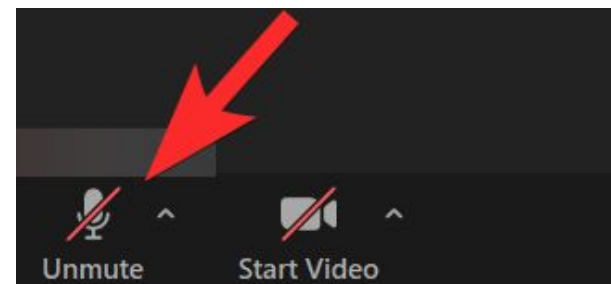
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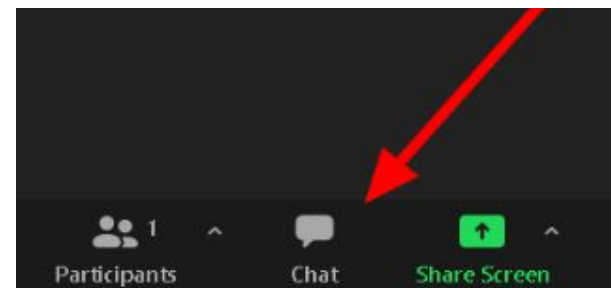
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On The Lookout:

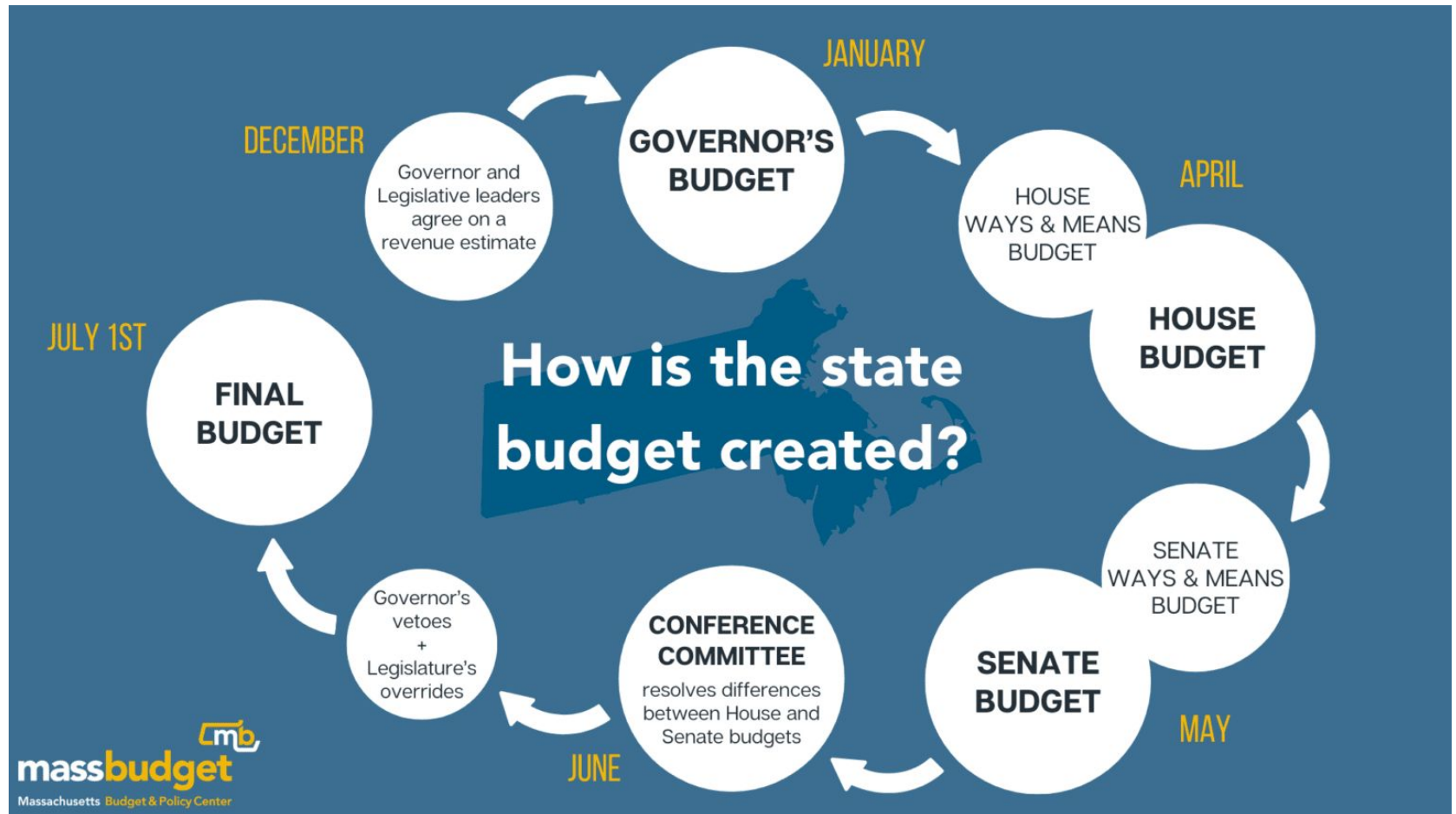
FY27 H2 Governor's Budget



- The Governor's Budget is the first step of the 2027 Budget
- *Expecting it to come out TOMORROW 1/28/2026*
- The budget will go through reviews, debates, and edits before it is finalized
- **You will hear from PPAL** about advocacy opportunities related to the budget release

Massachusetts Budget Process Timeline

Overview



On The Lookout:

FY27 H2 Governor's Budget

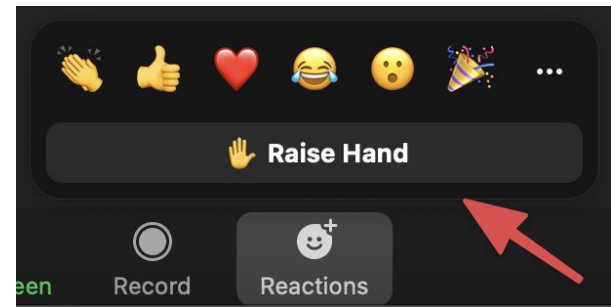
- Governor Healey said in State of the Commonwealth address the budget proposal includes
 - **Full funding of the Student Opportunity Act** with \$7.6 billion in Chapter 70 aid, guarantees a minimum per-pupil aid of \$75 for school districts
 - **\$20 million for Rural School Aid**, a program that helps rural school districts address certain costs, more than twice what was received last fiscal year
 - \$154.3 million for **school districts' transportation costs**
 - **Full funding for the Special Education Circuit Breaker**, at \$802.7 million. for the costs of transporting out-of-district special education students
- The Executive Office of Health & Human Services (EOHHS) will hold the Department of Mental Health (DMH) Child, Youth, and Family Services (CYF) budget
- **You will hear from PPAL** about advocacy opportunities related to the budget release

Discussion:

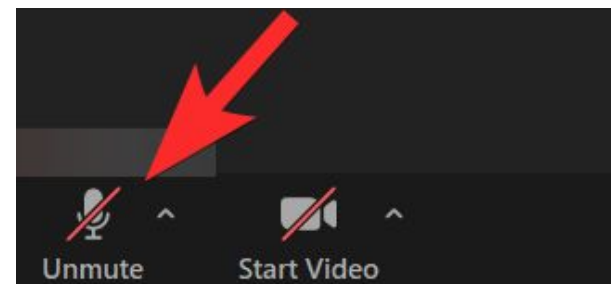
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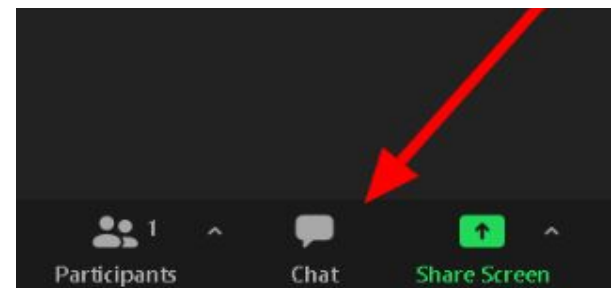
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DOI Listening Sessions

PUBLIC LISTENING SESSIONS AND HEARINGS BY THE MASSACHUSETTS DIVISION OF INSURANCE (DOI) LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD!!

CONSUMERS:

Having trouble finding a behavioral health provider for you or your kids?
Do you have insurance, but still have to pay out of pocket?
Have you been denied services due to prior authorization or step therapy?

PROVIDERS:

Are you tired of being underpaid by commercial health plans, or being paid late?
Sick of audits and pre-payment reviews?
Are you tired of filling out prior authorization forms and other burdensome and other unreasonable administrative paperwork for treatments that your patients need?

ADVOCATES:

Do you see problems with consumers with insurance accessing health care, finding providers, or getting the care they need?

*Thank you to our friends
at HLA for this information!*

health law **advocates** | **HA**
Lawyers Fighting for Health Care Justice

www.healthlawadvocates.org

70 Franklin Street, Suite 500, Boston, MA 02110
Main: 617-338-5241

Access to Care and Coverage Practice:
Toll-free: 855-218-2519 | Fax: 617-338-5242

Mental Health Advocacy Program for Kids:
Toll-free: 855-218-3965 | Fax: 833-915-0171

The Massachusetts Division of Insurance (DOI) has scheduled a series of information sessions during the months of January and February 2026 to listen to concerns by consumers, providers and advocates about commercial health plans. Visit <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/division-of-insurance> for more information.

DOI Listening Sessions

PUBLIC LISTENING SESSIONS AND HEARINGS BY THE MASSACHUSETTS DIVISION OF INSURANCE (DOI) LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD!!

Highlights of DOI Listening Sessions:

Date	Time(s)	Subject	Written Comments due by
1/28/26	1pm, 6pm	Contracting practices by health plans	2/11/2026
2/3/26	1pm, 6pm	Behavioral Health Intermediate Care, services that should be covered but aren't	2/17/2026
2/11/26	1pm, 6pm	BHCA – Behavioral Health for Children	2/25/2026
2/17/26	1pm, 6pm	Payment delays, barriers, and low rates by health plans	3/3/2026
2/19/26	1pm	New rules restricting the over-use of prior authorization	2/26/2026

We will send you a comprehensive document with more information!

Thank you to our friends at HLA for this information!

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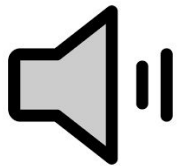
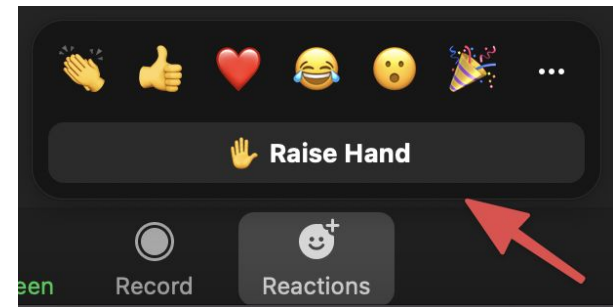
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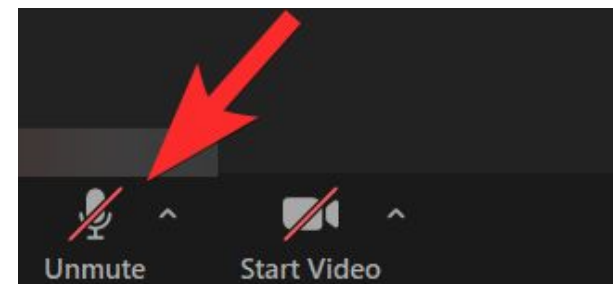
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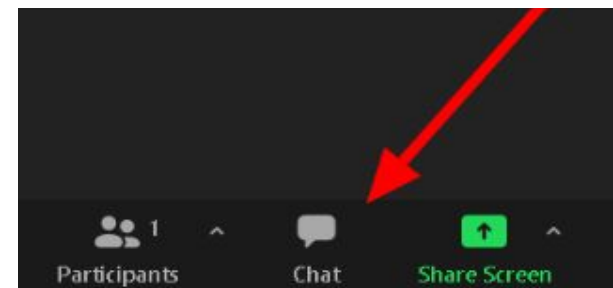
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PPAL's Town Hall with the Department of Mental Health



DMH + OCA Partnering on Restraint/Seclusion

- We were happy to hear that the Department of Mental Health (DMH) will be working closely with the Office of the Child Advocate (OCA) regarding restraint/seclusion
- More to come!

What is the Office of the Child Advocate (OCA)?

The OCA, established by the Massachusetts Legislature in 2008, works to ensure Massachusetts state agencies provide children with quality services and that children receiving state services are protected from harm.

<https://www.mass.gov/orgs/office-of-the-child-advocate>

PPAL's Town Hall with the Department of Mental Health

Updated Case Management Model: What's Changing in Practice?



Open Access Support

- **Staff available at DMH sites** to help with issue resolution, resource navigation, application, and general support for individuals with mental illness and their families
- **Starting with current and former DMH clients** with intent to expand access in the future



Increased Client Engagement

- Increased use of **Critical Needs Case Management** to achieve faster stabilization during crisis periods through timely access to intensive services
- Defined expectations for **meeting with clients frequently** (generally, once a week for Critical Needs Case Management, twice a month for Extended Case Management)



Structured Decisions on Client Transitions

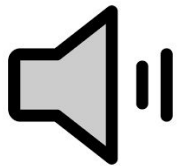
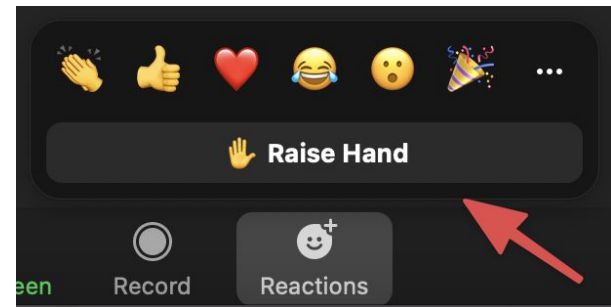
- **Structured approach** to determining when clients are ready to move to less intensive services
- Maintain focus on **helping clients reach their goals and build skills for independence**
- Ensures clients receive the **right level of support** at the right time

Discussion:

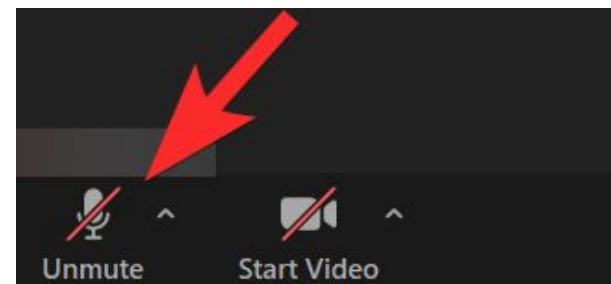
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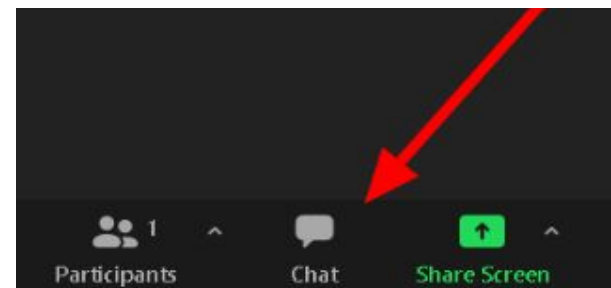
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Networking—

Do you have

Resources

Job Opportunities

Recommendations

Requests

that you would like to share?

Please come off mute, or indicate in the chat that you would like to speak!



Thank You for attending PPAL's Inside Track!

You will receive the bulletins and resources discussed within the next few days.