



MASSACHUSETTS PSYCHIATRIC SOCIETY

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www.psychiatry-mps.org

August 25, 2010

Governor Deval Patrick
Massachusetts State House
Office of the Governor
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Governor Patrick :

We are writing to express our grave concern about the Department of Mental Health's FY2011 budget. We are very aware of the fiscal constraints that the Commonwealth continues to face, certainly this has been more severe and longer than anyone could have anticipated. However the continued decimation of the DMH budget as well as all of the Human Services accounts adds pain to families and more expense to the Commonwealth.

The Massachusetts Psychiatric Society (MPS), a medical specialty organization represents over 1,600 of the practicing psychiatric physicians in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. We engaged our membership to reach out to the Congressional Delegation to support the additional FMAP money.

We implore you to support the flow of FMAP money back to the accounts that have been cut to the barest bone already; specifically we refer to the closure of up to 100 DMH beds On the inpatient beds in their facilities. These beds are used for the most severely mental ill patients in the Commonwealth. The current difficulty in securing a state hospital bed already puts tremendous strain on the acute hospital units and the general medical units that board psychiatric patients with nowhere to go. Our acute inpatient units are forced to keep patients requiring intermediate care for months waiting for intermediate care beds to open up. In addition the lack of acute care beds causes the general hospital emergency rooms to keep patients for very extensive periods of time with staff that are ill prepared to provide ongoing psychiatric support. Each time another link in the continuum of care is cut back- the ripples are felt throughout the system. In addition it is more costly and less humane when seriously ill psychiatric patients end up in our criminal justice system, with treatment in jail or prison rather than a hospital.

We simply cannot afford another reduction in state hospital beds that will take us well below the number that are needed for our statewide population.

We applaud DMH for trying to manage reductions through a voluntary retirement and layoff program, however with the FMAP money now on its way to the Commonwealth it is our hope that you and your Secretary and Commissioners will reevaluate and that these FMAP dollars are used for their intended purpose.

Thank you for your consideration. The Massachusetts Psychiatric Society would be happy to discuss this and all matters relating to the provision of psychiatric care in the Commonwealth if we can be of ongoing assistance.

Sincerely,

Marie Hobart, MD, President
Massachusetts Psychiatric Society