

June 15, 2015

Representative Brian Dempsey
Chairman
House Ways & Means Committee
House of Representatives
State House
Boston, MA 02133

Re: Budget Line Item 5042-5000: Massachusetts Child Psychiatry Access Project/ MCPAP for Moms

Dear Chairman Dempsey,

I write on behalf of the Massachusetts Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics (“MCAAP”) which represents over 1,800 pediatricians practicing in the Commonwealth to urge the conference committee to support the Senate provision in Line Item 5042-5000 which would increase funding for the Massachusetts Child Psychiatry Access Project (MCPAP) by \$500,000 and bring MCPAP for Moms to full capacity statewide.

We thank you for your support of MCPAP in prior budgets. MCPAP assists primary care pediatricians with diagnosis and appropriate triaging of child mental health disorders. MCPAP for Moms, a vital new program, builds the capacity of providers to effectively prevent, identify, and manage postpartum depression, which can have a significant impact on the health and well being of both mothers and children.

Massachusetts Child Psychiatry Access Project (MCPAP)

Since 2004 MCPAP has provided invaluable assistance to primary care pediatricians throughout the Commonwealth who are increasingly on the front lines in diagnosing and treating child mental health disorders. MCPAP provides mental health consultation by telephone to pediatricians, office evaluations for children and families when necessary, and provides referrals to mental health providers when necessary to facilitate access. It has served children and families regardless of insurance. Currently, well over a majority of the MCPAP encounters per year are used by members of commercial insurers. Our members in pediatric practice have found MCPAP to be an essential support for the coordination of services within the medical home. Over the years MCPAP has saved the Commonwealth and commercial insurers from paying for unnecessary emergency room visits and has improved behavioral health care in the pediatric medical home. It now serves as a national model being replicated in multiple states.

MCPAP for Moms

Now MCPAP has developed MCPAP for Moms to respond to the recommendations of the Postpartum Depression Commission to identify and treat 10-20% of parents during

the perinatal period who suffer from unidentified and untreated depression. This program would enable pediatricians and other physicians who screen mothers for postpartum depression, to have access to behavioral health consultations for patients with postpartum depression, and to have access to referral resources. This access will help to alleviate the suffering of mothers with post partum depression and the potential adverse effects of such depression on their children. This program also has the potential for preventing unnecessary emergency room visits for infants and unnecessary hospitalizations for parents.

It is important that MCPAP continue to maintain the improvements in child mental health in the Commonwealth and be supported to expand and address issues with postpartum depression. An expanded MCPAP will support the medical home for children and families and prevent inappropriate emergency room utilization and hospital admissions for mental health services.

The Massachusetts Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics strongly urges you to support the Senate adopted provision to Line Item 5042-5000 and expand MCPAP to include MCPAP for Moms.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Michael L. McManus". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent initial "M".

Michael McManus, M.D., MPH, FAAP

President, the Massachusetts Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics