

**Department of Mental Health Inpatient Study Commission**  
**Public Hearing**  
**Holyoke Community College, Holyoke**  
**June 10, 2009**

This was the fourth of five scheduled hearings of the DMH Inpatient Study Commission. It was held at Holyoke Community College, Kittredge Center, 303 Homestead Avenue, Holyoke, MA, from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. Deaf and hard of hearing services were available if needed.

Commission members attending included: Marylou Sudders, Co-chair, John Bove, Philip Hadley, Jim Durkin, Vicker DiGravio, and John Scibak.

Ms. Sudders called the meeting to order, introduced members of the Commission, and articulated the Commission's goals. The current economic downturn and resulting fiscal realities has created a set of challenges for the Department that include:

- an immediate structural deficit of \$24M;
- an already significant reduction to DMH community services; and
- more than 200 of 788 adult patients are ready for community services.

Ms. Sudders posed four questions to public hearing participants:

1. How should the Department balance its vision of Community First (defined as supporting persons with mental illness so that they can live independently in the community) with the need for adult inpatient capacity?
2. Given current budget challenges, should the Department increase community based resources by reducing its adult inpatient capacity?
3. In evaluating the Department's adult inpatient system, how should inpatient resources be prioritized?
4. How can the Department best serve individuals transition from its adult inpatient system to less restrictive, more independent living in the community?

Representative John Scibak made a few introductory remarks. Approximately 40 persons attended the hearing. The following 12 individuals testified before the Commission:

Benjamin Liptzin, M.D.  
Baystate Health  
(see submitted written comments)

Andrew Bourke, Ph.D.  
BHN  
(see submitted written comments)

Robert Fleischner  
Center for Public Representation  
(see submitted written comments)

Jim Callahan  
Hawthorn Services

Mary Culler

Cheryl Stevens  
(see submitted written comments, post hearing)

Alex Sabo, M.D.  
Berkshire Medical Center  
(see submitted written comments)

Abby Charland

Amanda Bray  
Western Massachusetts Recovery Learning Community

Janice Sorenson  
Western Massachusetts Recovery Learning Community

Nan Wychorski  
Recovery Learning Community

Deborah Chandler  
Western Massachusetts Recovery Learning Community

Commission members reminded participants that the Commission has extended the time period to submit written comments to Friday, June 19.