



2026 Medicaid Summit

Co-hosted by **The Council of State Governments (CSG),
the Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Council (MDDC)
and CSG East**

Co-sponsored by:

Representative Jay Livingstone and Senator Robyn Kennedy,
Co-Chairs of the Massachusetts Joint Committee on Children,
Families and Persons with Disabilities.

Representative John Lawn and Senator Cindy Friedman,
Co-Chairs of the Massachusetts Joint Committee
on Health Care Financing.

Massachusetts Senator Paul Mark,
Organizer

Tuesday, June 9, 2026

Massachusetts State House



**The Council
of State
Governments**



EAST

Welcome

Welcome to the 2026 Medicaid Summit, an important discussion on the evolving future of Medicaid. As one of the nation's largest public health programs, Medicaid continues to play a critical role in supporting access to care for millions of individuals and families across the country.

The enactment of H.R.1 in July 2025 introduced a series of significant policy changes that will reshape the Medicaid landscape between 2026 and 2028. These reforms represent one of the most substantial transformations in the program's history, including changes related to program growth, eligibility and participation requirements, and long-term federal spending.

This event brings together subject matter experts to examine the implications of these changes and explore opportunities and challenges ahead. We hope today's conversations foster informed collaboration and a deeper understanding of how these reforms may impact systems, communities, and the individuals Medicaid serves.

About the MDDC



The Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Council (MDDC) is an independent agency, funded by the federal government, dedicated to empowering people with developmental disabilities and their families to enjoy full productive lives by promoting self-sufficiency, community inclusion & opportunity.

MDDC Leadership



Raquel Quezada, Chairperson

Raquel is from the Dominican Republic and is the mother of 4 children - one of whom is medically complex and has Cerebral Palsy, and two with ADHD just like herself. She is an avid advocate in the Latino community, but also for all Massachusetts families and wherever else her support is needed. Previously, Quezada was a Boston Children's

Hospital LEND program fellow from 2017-18, an Allen C. Crocker fellow from 2018-19, and a student studying Psychology. She is experienced in Communications, Radio, and TV Production in her home country and is a published author.

Equipped with the knowledge, compassion, and care of a mother of a child with a disability and with education on different types of disabilities and situations, Quezada created and began hosting the local radio and TV program "Cambiando El Mundo de Personas con Discapacidades" (Changing the World of People with Disabilities.) Quezada's overall mission is to educate, inform, and share knowledge on what information and resources are available for people with special needs, and provide a place where other families can come and share their experiences.



Craig Hall, Executive Director

Craig C. Hall is Executive Director of the Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Council (MDDC) who serves as Chief Executive Officer of the Council. In his role, Craig is responsible for administering the statewide operations, the strategic leadership and implementation of all functional activities of the Developmental Disabilities Council to

accomplish advocacy, capacity building and systemic change in Massachusetts. The Executive Director has a collaborative relationship with federal and state agencies as well as Congressional and state legislators.

Craig serves on the Executive Committee and is the Budget Chairperson for The Council of State Governments Eastern Region. Craig also serves on the CSG National Finance Committee.

Craig previously served as Deputy Director and Chief Financial Officer of the MDDC. Craig serves on the Audit Committee for the National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities. Craig earned his Bachelor of Science in Political Science and a Master's degree in Public Administration.

Legislative Sponsors



Representative Jay Livingstone

House Chair, Joint Committee on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities

State Representative Jay Livingstone is serving in his seventh term representing the 8th Suffolk District in the Massachusetts House of Representatives, where he has served since July 2013. He represents parts of Beacon Hill, Back Bay, West End, and The Fenway. He has served as House Chair of the Joint Committee on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities since 2023 and in 2021 was appointed as a founding member of the Massachusetts Rare Disease Advisory Council.

Representative Livingstone's work on behalf of children, families, and persons with disabilities has led to the enactment of significant legislation. His leadership has strengthened protections for substance-exposed newborns, ensured foster children receive their Disability and SSI benefits, and in 2025 the House of Representatives engrossed a bill that will replace outdated/offensive terminology with person-first language in state law. He is also the House sponsor of major laws expanding reproductive health care access, advancing pay equity, and streamlining access to SNAP and MassHealth benefits for hundreds of thousands of Massachusetts residents.



Senator Robyn Kennedy

Senate Chair, Joint Committee on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities

Senator Robyn Kennedy, a lifelong resident of Worcester, serves as the State Senator for the First Worcester District. She is a dedicated champion of the care economy, focusing on strengthening services from childcare to elder

care, investing in the workforce, improving regional public transportation, and addressing inequities. Before her election, Senator Kennedy served as the Chief Operating Officer at the YWCA Central Massachusetts, where she advocated for women, children, and marginalized communities. Her public service also includes roles as Deputy Chief of Staff to former Lt. Governor Tim Murray and Deputy Assistant Secretary for Children, Youth, and Families at the Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services.



Representative John Lawn

House Chair, Joint Committee on Health Care Financing

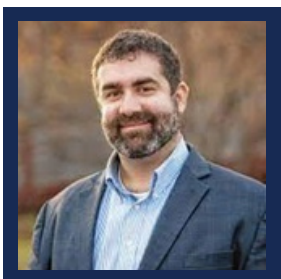
Born and raised in Watertown, Representative John Lawn graduated from Merrimack College in 1991. He has represented the 10 Middlesex District—which includes parts of Watertown, Waltham, and Newton—since 2011, and he currently serves as House Chair of the Joint Committee on Health Care Financing. Chair Lawn humbly carries on his family's deep commitment to health care. His mother—who came to Boston from Ireland in the early 1960's—his wife, and, most recently, his daughter are all nurses in the Boston area. Rep. Lawn's legislative achievements include campaign finance reform, veterans legislation, and statute of limitation reform. He lives in Watertown with his wife Shannon and five children.



Senator Cindy Friedman

Senate Chair, Joint Committee on Health Care Financing

Cindy F. Friedman was elected to the Massachusetts Senate in 2017 to represent the Fourth Middlesex District, which includes Arlington, Billerica, Burlington, Woburn, and precincts 1-2 and 4-7 in Lexington. Cindy's legislative agenda is informed by her decades of public activism, dating back to when she first marched to protect women's reproductive rights in the 1970s and she has grown to be a vocal champion for lowering prescription drug prices and expanding access to timely, quality health care, particularly mental and behavioral health care. Cindy's legislative priorities are also reflected in her committee, caucus and working group memberships she has held since her election to the Senate. Cindy currently serves as the Chairperson of the Joint Committee on Health Care Financing and the Chairperson of the Senate Committee on Steering and Policy, tasked with leading the Senate's RESPONSE 2025 initiative to respond to threats to the Commonwealth's residents from the federal government. Prior to becoming a state Senator, Cindy worked as a public school teacher, an executive in the high-tech industry, and later served for nearly a decade as chief of staff to the late Senator Ken Donnelly.



Senator Paul Mark

Paul Mark serves in the Massachusetts Senate, representing the Berkshire, Hampden, Franklin, and Hampshire District, which spans 57 communities across Western Massachusetts. Raised in a working-class family, Paul experienced firsthand the challenges of economic hardship after his father lost his job, shaping his commitment to expanding opportunity for others. A longtime member of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), Paul worked as a lineman and pursued higher education through night school, earning multiple degrees, including a law degree. Since entering public service, he has championed policies that support working families, strengthen rural communities, expand access to healthcare and education, and create good-paying union jobs. He currently serves as Senate Chair of the Joint Committee on Tourism, Arts and Cultural Development and Senate Vice Chair of Transportation.

National Landscape

H.R. 1, the Federal Budget Reconciliation Act of 2025, is a massive overhaul of the Medicaid program that will cut federal funding by nearly \$1 trillion over a decade. The law created new work and community engagement requirements and added more frequent enrollment eligibility checks for those in the Medicaid expansion population. States are charged with implementing these by January 1, 2027 despite difficult policy choices, just-arriving federal guidance, and the need to spend millions of dollars to hire more staff and upgrade technology systems. H.R. 1 also requires states to phase down Medicaid provider tax programs, which many states rely on to draw down federal matching funds and support payments to providers, and places new limits on state-directed payments, which state Medicaid agencies use to mandate how managed care organizations pay healthcare providers. Concerns that these Medicaid cuts would have a devastating effect on already struggling health facilities in rural communities, prompted Congress to include in H.R. 1 a \$50 billion Rural Health Transformation Fund. But as states look to implement innovative rural health initiatives they won approval for, there are fears the funds won't be enough to offset H.R. 1 cuts and may miss the mark in helping them sustain rural health long-term. Intergovernmental squabbles between legislative and executive branch officials may also complicate the ability of states to spend the rural health funds in time to show results and avoid clawback provisions in the bill. Anticipating the loss of federal funds, states have already faced difficult budget choices in 2026 and among the programs targeted for cuts are disability services and home and community-based services. The 2026 Medicaid Summit will highlight what's ahead for HCBS and the direct care workforce, the implementation of work requirements, state budget decision making and rural health transformation.



Sean Slone

Sean Slone is a Public Policy Manager at the national headquarters of The Council of State Governments (CSG) in Lexington, Kentucky. In recent years, he has staffed projects on long-term care, mental health policy and the future of work and directed the organization's Medicaid policy education programs. Previously, as CSG's Director of Transportation & Infrastructure

Policy, he spent a decade (2008-18) staffing the organization's Transportation & Infrastructure Public Policy Committee, organizing transportation-related convenings in Washington, D.C. and around the country and writing for CSG publications. A journalist by training, his career also has included a decade as a producer for C-SPAN in Washington, D.C. and five years as a producer/reporter for Kentucky Educational Television, where he covered the Kentucky General Assembly. Sean is a graduate of Emerson College and Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism.

2026 Medicaid Summit Agenda

Networking and Refreshments

10:00 - 10:30 a.m.

Welcome

10:30 - 10:40 a.m.

Opening Remarks

10:40 - 11:00 a.m.

The Council of State Governments *H.R.1 Implementation and Policy Issues*. The implementation challenges include work requirements, state budget impacts and other concerns, cost containment, eligibility rules and rural health transformation.

Presented By: Sean Slone

Panel 1: Medicaid-funded Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) and the Direct Care Workforce

11:00 - 11:45 a.m.

Medicaid is more than a health insurance program – it is the largest provider of long-term services and supports (LTSS) in the United States. Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) are a form of LTSS that enable people to live and engage in their communities, rather than institutional settings. The direct care workforce is essential to the delivery of HCBS. However, our current workforce is unable to meet current demand, let alone the growing need driven by an aging population and more people with disabilities living in the community.

Moderator: Nicole LeBlanc

Poem Reading: “The Mathematics of Mercy” by Betsy Johnson, M.Ed

Panelists: Joe Caldwell, PhD; Dorothy Hiersteiner, MPP

Panel 2: Implementation of H.R.1 and New Work Requirements

11:50 - 12:55 p.m.

Signed into law on July 4, 2025, H.R.1 (the One Big Beautiful Bill Act) cuts federal Medicaid spending by \$1 trillion over the next ten years. In addition, states must implement new work requirements and more frequent redeterminations for Medicaid beneficiaries. This poses a challenge for state governments and threatens the established rights of people with disabilities to live, and receive services, in the most integrated community setting possible.

Moderator: Nicole LeBlanc

Panelists: Gelila Selassie, J.D.; Alixe Bonardi, MS/MPA; Elizabeth LaMontagne

Informal Lunch Session: Medicaid and Employment: State Strategies to Expand Workforce Participation

12:55 - 1:25 p.m.

This session will explore the critical role Medicaid can play in advancing employment outcomes for people with disabilities. Participants will hear from a subject matter expert from the State Exchange on Employment & Disability (SEED), an initiative funded by the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy, on how states are leveraging Medicaid authorities, Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) waivers, and cross-agency coordination strategies to expand access to employment supports such as job coaching, supported employment, benefits counseling, and other workforce services.

Presented By: Ben Grauer, MHA

Panel 3: H.R.1 and State Budget Decision-Making

1:30 - 2:25 p.m.

The impending Medicaid cuts from H.R.1 will significantly impact state budgets. The legislation has already prompted states to consider tax code changes and make difficult choices on which Medicaid programs to retain and which they can no longer afford. This panel will highlight state budgetary impacts in 2026 and beyond.

Moderator: Sean Slone

Panelists: Wesley Tharpe, M.A.; Andrew Badaracco

Panel 4: Rural Health Transformation

2:30 - 3:25 p.m.

H.R. 1 included the \$50 billion Rural Health Transformation (RHT) Program, a major five-year initiative (2026-2030) aiming to revitalize rural healthcare delivery. It offers states, tribes, and territories funding for infrastructure, technology, and operational shifts to improve care access, while simultaneously navigating strict Medicaid reforms and reduced federal funding. But even as states work to quickly implement the initiatives they proposed in order to gain access to RHT funds, concerns remain about the limitations states must navigate and whether the program can insulate rural health facilities from the challenges they have faced in recent years and the Medicaid cuts H.R. 1 will bring over the course of the next decade.

Moderator: Sean Slone

Panelists: Cody Mullen, PhD; Eliza Lake, MSW; Andrew Badaracco, Kate Schedel, MPH

Opportunities for Legislators - CSG Medicaid Academies

3:30 - 4:00 p.m.

The Council of State Governments' Medicaid Foundations Academy and Medicaid Leadership Academy will be taking place in August, 2026. These programs are held at Washington Marriott Georgetown in Washington, DC. and are for legislative leaders. These programs provide travel and lodging stipends. More information will be provided during this session.

Presented By: Sean Slone

Panelists



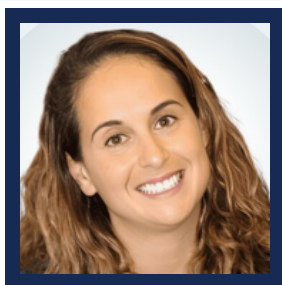
Nicole LeBlanc

Nicole LeBlanc is a policy assistant at HSRI. She currently works on the IDD Counts Health Data project, the Disability Map It WITH grant, the Idaho SYSTEM Redesign team on top of presenting at conferences and making webinar summaries plain language. She spent more than 8 years at Green Mountain Self-Advocates as Advocacy Director supporting self-advocates in communicating with elected officials and improving healthcare access. Nicole completed internships with the Administration on Intellectual and the Developmental Disabilities and Association of University Centers on Disabilities, and policy fellowships at The Autism Soc. of America and The NDRN. Nicole graduated from the Vermont LEND program as its first self-advocate graduate, and has consulted nationally on healthcare, employment, autism, dignity of risk, and person-centered planning. She has presented keynotes and webinars across the country and received the Steve Bartlett Award and David Joyce Advocate of the Year Award. Nicole currently works in policy, consulting, and disability employment initiatives while continuing to champion self-advocacy and systems change. In her own words, "No one is too disabled to live & work in the community!" She is the author of Disability Employment Policy 101 and WHY Employment Matters TOOLKITS.



Joe Caldwell, PhD

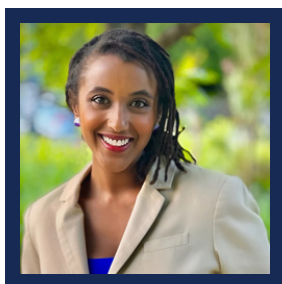
Dr. Caldwell is Director of the Community Living Policy Center within the Lurie Institute for Disability Policy at Brandeis University. He has over 30 years of experience in the field of disability as a researcher, policy expert, and family member of a young adult with Down syndrome. His research primarily focuses on improving access to Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services, self-direction, and supports for family caregivers. Prior to Brandeis, he directed public policy at national aging and disability organizations and worked for the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee as a Kennedy Fellow.



Dorothy Hiersteiner

Dorothy Hiersteiner is a Research Associate and the Human Services Research Institute (HSRI) Co-Director for National Core Indicators® (NCI®), an effort that began in 1997 to develop indicators and benchmarks of performance across state human service systems. Dorothy also developed and currently directs the NCI State of the Workforce, IDD and AD surveys, used to help states collect data on the stability and quality of the workforce supporting adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and the aging and physical disability population.

Dorothy's skills in strategic planning and coordination of multiple partner collaborations are critical in her role as coordinator to NCI. Dorothy's work with NCI also includes data management and data analysis, report writing and editing, and communications. She has contributed to numerous technical reports, data briefs, manuscripts, and training/TA materials. Dorothy is passionate about data, outcome measurement, evidence-based policy and social justice and uses these interests to guide her work with NCI.



Gelila Selassie

Gelila has been with Justice in Aging since 2020. Her work focuses on strengthening Medicaid, expanding access to Home and Community-Based Services, and improving the quality of care for nursing home residents. She collaborates closely with national partners and local advocates to address systemic barriers, respond to emerging threats to Medicaid, and advance policies that support older adults' rights, autonomy, and well-being. Prior to Justice in Aging, Gelila worked in legal services in North Carolina as an Equal Justice Works Fellow. She received her BA from the University of South Carolina and her J.D. from Wake Forest University School of Law.



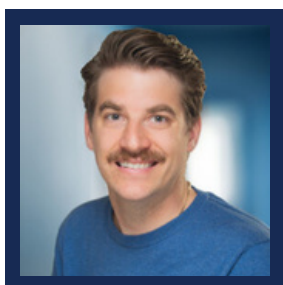
Alixe Bonardi

Alixe has over 30 years of experience with HCBS for people with disabilities. As the IDD team lead, she has grown the National Core Indicator's (NCI) work, elevating participant voice and experience in state-level quality monitoring of HCBS for people with Intellectual and developmental disability. At HSRI, Alixe currently co-directs the Grassroots Project and supports the I/DD Counts initiative, both funded by the federal Administration for Community Living. She has led participant engagement efforts including community-based participatory research, community focus groups, and a grant-funded Citizen's Jury project with people with IDD developing policy recommendations. She has served as principal investigator for several AHRQ-funded and CDC-funded research projects. Prior to joining HSRI, Alixe was the director of the Center for Developmental Disabilities Evaluation and Research at the University of Massachusetts Medical School's E.K. Shriver Center. She has a Master of Health Administration from Suffolk University, a Master of Science in occupational therapy from Columbia University, and a Bachelor of Science in physiology from McGill University.



Elizabeth LaMontagne

Elizabeth LaMontagne is the Chief Operating Officer for MassHealth, where she oversees member eligibility policy and operations. During her tenure at MassHealth, she led the agency's post-pandemic redeterminations effort and is currently implementing the new federal work and education requirements. Prior to MassHealth, she worked in private sector and government roles supporting strategy and operations.

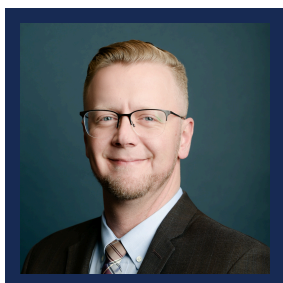


Ben Grauer

Ben Grauer, MHA, is a Policy Research Analyst for the State Exchange on Employment & Disability (SEED), an initiative funded by the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) and managed by Concepts, Inc. In this capacity, Ben provides expert-level technical assistance to state and local policymakers, identifying and sharing effective policy

options to expand workforce participation and economic opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

Ben works at the intersection of health and disability employment policy, with a focus on tracking legislative trends and developing strategic frameworks for action. His work is informed by his previous tenure as a Program Coordinator at University of Iowa Health Care, where he led a high-level policy workgroup of state agency leaders and disability organizations to align Medicaid policies with disability employment systems. There, he highlighted ways Medicaid systems are organized and influenced by policies that can incentivize employment when functioning well but serve as barriers when misunderstood or could use some adjustments. He believes that with the right design and properly allocated resources, Medicaid services can serve as an invaluable tool that can be used to connect people with disabilities with fulfilling careers and communities that value their contributions.



Wesley Tharpe

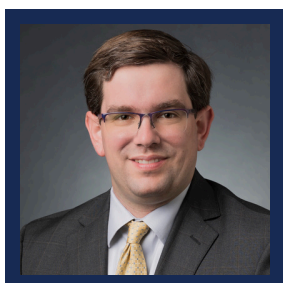
Wesley Tharpe is Senior Advisor for State Tax Policy at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP) in Washington, D.C. In this role, he leads the Center's research and analyses of state revenue policies, trends, and opportunities, and collaborates closely with fellow researchers, advocates, and other internal and external stakeholders to help drive sound, equitable

tax policy reform in the states. Prior to joining the Center as a Senior Policy Analyst in 2018, Tharpe served as Research Director at the Georgia Budget and Policy Institute, where he marshalled the organization's policy agenda and for seven years coordinated with advocates, elected officials, and community partners on topics including tax reform, jobs and wages, and immigrant inclusion. A native of Fayetteville, Georgia, Tharpe holds a B.A. in Political Science and International Affairs from the University of Georgia and an M.A. in Public Policy from the Johns Hopkins University.



Andrew Badaracco

Andrew Badaracco is a Senior Healthcare Policy Consultant with the Milliman Indianapolis Health Practice. He brings more than 16 years of experience analyzing and evaluating Medicaid policy initiatives at both the federal and state levels, with deep expertise in payment policy, financing, access to care requirements, and fee-for-service methodologies. At Milliman, Andrew applies this expertise to support state Medicaid agencies and other stakeholders by analyzing federal and state statutes and regulations, identifying policy and operational risks, and advising on implementation strategies. His work focuses on developing legally compliant, practical policy solutions. Prior to joining Milliman, Andrew spent 15 years at the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), including serving as Deputy Director of the Division of Reimbursement Policy. In this role, he led the review and evaluation of proposed Medicaid initiatives, contributed to the development of federal regulations and sub-regulatory guidance, and assessed the legal and operational implications of policy changes. His work included direct responsibility for State Plan Amendments (SPAs), upper payment limit (UPL) demonstrations, and federal policy interpretation related to access to care and supplemental payment methodologies.



Cody Mullen, PhD

Dr. Cody Mullen is a Clinical Professor of Public Health and Director of Professional Graduate Studies at Purdue University. He is also an Associate Director for the Center for Rural and Migrant Health. He holds a PhD in Health Policy and Management from the Indiana University Indianapolis Richard M. Fairbanks School of Public Health.

Dr. Mullen's research focuses on the application of scientific and engineering principles and theoretical frameworks to examine trends, impact patient outcomes, and improve care coordination in the realm of health services and patient-centered outcomes research. His expertise lies in project development and execution in diverse acute care and outpatient settings, including rural, urban, and resource-constrained communities. He leads and executes a strong research portfolio as an independent investigator, specifically on vulnerable populations, including physically, mentally, or cognitively disabled individuals, as well as individuals living in rural communities or other health provider shortage areas. He serves as on the Board of Directors of Wabash Center, The Arc of Indiana, and The Arc-National. He is a past board member of the National Rural Health Association.



Eliza Lake

Eliza Lake has been the Director Health Policy and Strategic Initiatives at the Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services since April 2024, and is responsible for overseeing a portfolio of inter-departmental health policy initiatives. Her role involves collaborating with agency heads and EOHHS leadership to advance aligned policy strategy, implementing new initiatives, and facilitating cross-agency coordination on issues as diverse as health equity, long-term supports and services, behavioral health, health care finance, and, most recently,

rural health transformation. A native of Western Mass, where she manages her family farm in its third-generation, Eliza has recently been named as the Project Director for the Commonwealth's Rural Health Transformation Program. Prior to returning to state service, for ten years Eliza was the CEO of Hilltown Community Health Center, a small FQHC that serves the rural Hilltowns of Western Mass and is the only provider of medical, dental, behavioral health, optometry, and community services for most of its service area. Previously, she worked as a consultant to state governments and non-profits in the area of long-term supports and services policy and served as the Director of Community Supports and Services at the Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs. She has a BA from Harvard University and an MSW from Boston University.



Kate Schedel

Kate Schedel is a Healthcare Management Consultant at Milliman with more than 15 years of experience in public health and global health. She has extensive expertise in project management, program design and evaluation, strategic planning, and conducting needs assessments. Throughout her career, Kate has partnered with organizations worldwide to improve health outcomes through innovative, data-driven approaches and sustainable systems change. Her work has included leading statewide maternal and child health initiatives, designing evaluation frameworks, managing multimillion-dollar federal grants, and supporting healthcare systems in addressing maternal mortality and social determinants of health. Prior to consulting, Kate served as Director of Maternal and Child Health Programs at the Indiana Department of Health and worked on public health initiatives across Central and South America. She holds a BS from the University of Michigan and an MPH from Yale University.

Contributing Staff - MDDC



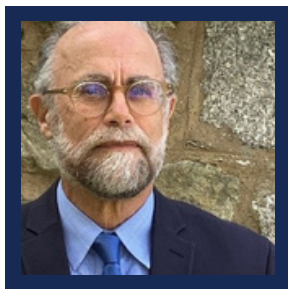
Jennifer Bertrand, Deputy Director

For two decades Jennifer Bertrand's leadership contributions in the policy arena have resulted in the advancement of human and civil rights for people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD). She has managed a wide range of policy priorities including issues related to housing, Medicaid funding, supported decision-making, education, healthcare, accessibility, employment, etc. Driven by her lived experience as a mother, advancing the rights of her now adult daughter and others who experience IDD are deeply personal to Jennifer, and fuel her passion for this work. As the Deputy Director at the Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Council (MDDC), Jennifer directs the daily operations, oversees the State Plan and coordinates the Council's policy priorities. Jennifer is committed to empowering individuals with disabilities and their family members so they can live with dignity and enjoy meaningful inclusive lives.



Christine Joyal, Admin. Services Coordinator

Christine serves as the Administrative Services Coordinator for the Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Council, where she supports business operations, financial management, and agency initiatives while working closely with the Executive Director. She also assists the DD Suite Team by training Developmental Disabilities Councils on the platform and providing technical support. Outside of her professional role, Christine is deeply involved in volunteer and community service. She serves as President of Blue Star Mothers Eastern MA Chapter 2 and supports numerous military-focused initiatives across Massachusetts. She is also active with the AGA Boston Chapter, where she was recognized with the Volunteer of the Year ACE Award. In addition, Christine has held leadership roles with the Massachusetts Chapter of the Tourette Association, a meaningful cause to her as several of her family members, including her adult son, have Tourette syndrome. She has received the Viktoria Holm Kramer Volunteer Recognition Award for her outstanding advocacy and volunteer service.



Rick Glassman, Legal Disability Policy Analyst

Rick is a public interest and disability rights attorney with over forty-one years of practice experience. He retired as the director of advocacy at the Disability Law Center (DLC) in Boston in January 2025 and has continued to work on pro bono matters with disability rights organizations, mostly related to including legislative and policy issues. He is particularly interested in the rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, especially related to community integration, personal autonomy and independence; the right to meaningful residential, employment, and day services and support; and the prevention and investigation of abuse and neglect. Rick is a graduate of Northeastern University School of Law and Colgate University and holds a certificate in management and leadership from Harvard University.



Jackson Crilley, Communications Coordinator

Jackson Crilley is a Boston-based communications professional with experience in mission-driven and public sector-focused organizations. With a background in design and visual communications, he combines creative strategy with written and verbal communication skills to develop clear, accessible, and impactful messaging. His work is driven by a commitment to

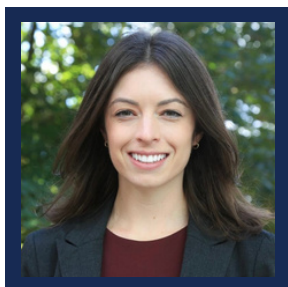
informing communities, supporting public understanding, and creating meaningful change. Previously, Jackson interned with the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind, where he was first introduced to work in government and disability advocacy. He holds a BA in Public Relations from Suffolk University.



Liz Fancher, Program Specialist

Liz Fancher has worked at the Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Council for over 30 years in a variety of roles. For the past 20+ years, Liz has served as the MDDC's Program Specialist. In this capacity, her work has included grants management, program planning, implementation and reporting, policy work, events planning, and working with Disability

Fellowship recipients. She has served on a variety of coalitions and committees to advance and improve policies and programs that affect people with developmental disabilities and their families.



Kaitlin Stober, Policy Research Associate

Kaitlin Stober is a Policy Research Associate with the MDDC and a PhD candidate in Social Policy at the Heller School for Social Policy and Management at Brandeis University. She is also a graduate researcher with the Lurie Institute of Disability Policy's dedicated center on community living. Kaitlin has served state DD networks for nearly 10 years, having

previously worked as a Senior Research Specialist at the University of Illinois Chicago's Institute on Disability and Human Development. She holds a MS in Disability Studies from Trinity College Dublin.



Destiny Maxam, Policy Coordinator

Destiny is a disability advocate and community organizer dedicated to advancing equitable policy and systems change. Her work focuses on connecting lived experience with policy, helping to ensure disability perspectives are meaningfully reflected in decision-making. Destiny has experience supporting legislative efforts, coordinating public testimony, and

engaging stakeholders across the disability community. Destiny is deeply committed to building spaces where disabled voices are heard, valued, and centered. As a wheelchair user, she brings both personal and professional insight into the barriers people face, and works to advance solutions that support independence, dignity, and full participation in the community. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Psychology from the University of Wisconsin.

The Mathematics of Mercy

by Betsy Johnson, M.Ed

A direct care worker holds
someone's universe for eighteen dollars an hour,
lifts worlds, bathes dignity back into being,
her hands trembling now
as she reads the letter
saying her client's hours are cut,
knowing some bodies can't survive
on spreadsheet logic.

They speak of cuts in marble rooms,
voices that have never whispered
"your therapy isn't medically necessary"
to a non-verbal child
who just learned to make sounds
like morning birds.

In living rooms turned sacred spaces,
therapists pack up their tools of possibility,
weighted vests, sensory brushes,
pieces of someone's future
now deemed too expensive
by men who've never seen
how a body learns to trust itself
one careful touch at a time.

Listen to power chairs going still,
to screens falling dark in throats
that borrowed them for voice,
to support workers saying goodbye
to people who stopped being clients,
but were more like family
somewhere between the first smile
and the last hug,
while offshore accounts grow fat
on the mathematics of suffering.

This is how a nation bleeds:
not on battlefields but in group homes,
not from enemy fire but from funding gaps,
where independence becomes too expensive,
where institution beds cost less
than community care.

In the halls of power,
they call this fiscal responsibility,
as if responsibility means
telling a mother her daughter
can no longer see the therapist
who taught her how to speak,
as if America means
pricing dignity like a luxury good.

Every denial letter bears
a signature of someone
who's never watched a child
take their first steps at twelve,
never seen the light in eyes
when words finally come,
never felt the weight
of a family's hopes
balanced against
the coldness of cost.

Yet in these rooms where care persists,
where love defies their calculations,
we piece together what they tear apart
like a quilt of borrowed time,
with midnight shifts and morning prayers,
hands that hold when budgets say let go.
Here, in this web of grace we weave,
Because what flows through us is stronger
than their ledgers
and our stubborn refusal
to let spreadsheets ever tell us
what a life is worth.

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Special Thank You To:

The Council of State Governments

The Council of State Governments (CSG) is our nation's only national organization serving all three branches of state government. Created by the states in 1933, CSG continues to serve as a trusted forum facilitating the exchange of ideas and information among state officials. Headquartered in Lexington, KY, CSG also serves as a catalyst for innovation and excellence in state governance.

CSG is also unique as a region-based forum that fosters collaboration and cooperation among states and territories in each of its four regions. Through its regional structure and regional offices, state officials can discuss and find regional solutions to uniquely regional problems. The CSG Eastern Region members, consisting of the states from Maine to Maryland, Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands, are served by the CSG Eastern Office, located in Manhattan since 1937. The oldest regional office of CSG, the Eastern Office produces regional publications, provides staff support to regional committees, sponsors training programs for state officials from its member states as well as promotes policies on the federal level beneficial to the region.

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Additional Resources

The Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Council has an online disability policy resource library that includes fact sheets, policy spotlights and community stories on the topic of Medicaid. Scan the QR code or visit the link below to review the resource library:



mass.gov/disability-policy

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