

THE AUDITOR'S REPORT



News & Updates

from the Office of the State Auditor Suzanne M. Bump

Making government work better



Suzanne M. Bump
State Auditor



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Dear Friend,

Last month marked the beginning of a new year—a new fiscal year that is. While a new fiscal year generally does not involve popping champagne or kisses at midnight, like the beginning of a new calendar year, it does involve reflections on the accomplishments of the past twelve months, and a look ahead toward goals for the coming year.

The last fiscal year provided some significant milestones for our office and we continued to produce impactful audits that will make government work better. For example, one audit found [MassHealth made up-to \\$193 million dollars in improper payments](#) for behavioral health services and we provided recommendations for how the agency can improve. The Senate in particular took an interest in ensuring the problem is resolved by including language in its budget requiring the agency to develop a corrective action plan as a result of this audit.

We also continued to strengthen the state's social safety net by [building on our successful track record of identifying fraud in public benefit programs](#). To these efforts, we launched an initiative to identify barriers qualified individuals face when seeking access to these programs, and released [our first audit with recommendations to address these barriers](#).

And we released a report [examining 35 years of work by the office to assist local municipalities](#). This report found that through our work, we have helped to secure approximately \$343 million in state funding or other remediation for local governments.

However, as we begin this new fiscal year, we know that work remains. Trust in government and our institutions continues to lag. Through our work, I believe Massachusetts can show that, regardless of the rancor in Washington, D.C., government can work for the people we serve.

Thank you,

Suzanne M. Bump
Auditor of the Commonwealth

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[Office of the Chief Medical Examiner](#)

[Barnstable County](#)

[BSI 3rd Quarter Report](#)

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Recent Press Releases

[Audit Finds Chief Medical Examiner Slow to Complete Toxicology Examinations and Autopsy Reports](#)

[Bump Calls for Improved Administration of Leased Properties and Financing for Capital Projects in Barnstable County](#)

[Bump Calls for Improved Collaboration Between State and Municipal Government on Gun Licensing](#)

[Audit Finds MassHealth could have saved millions on Medication Management](#)

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The Office of the State Auditor recently released a report examining the impacts of the Chapter 224 Health Care Cost Containment Law in Massachusetts. You [can find the analysis here](#).

OSA Focus: Chapter 224

While debates about the future of health care have dominated both state and federal discussions recently, last month, the Office of the State Auditor (OSA) [released a report examining the impacts of Chapter 224, the healthcare cost containment law passed in 2012](#). The report analyzes whether the law achieved its goals related to cost-containment, access to and quality of health care, the workforce, and racial and ethnic disparities.

When it comes to health care in the Commonwealth, we like to think we are doing better than much of the nation. That's true in many areas— for example, while health care costs continue to grow, the growth in Massachusetts is lower than the national average, but there are two areas that should ring alarm bells: one is the continuing racial and ethnic disparities in health outcomes and the second is the looming workforce crisis we face.

In assessing the law's impact on health outcomes for various populations, we found glaring disparities that continue to exist for African-Americans and Latinos in particular. The rate of deaths from prostate cancer was twice as high for African-American men as white men; infant mortality was also twice as high for African-Americans as for whites; and African-Americans have a higher risk than others of having or dying from a stroke.

The other 'disparity' that the health care industry needs to address is the inequity in the wages paid to direct care workers, particularly for home health aides and personal assistants, for which there is a growing need as our population ages. Wages for many of these workers has remained stagnant since 2004. This is a situation that is unsustainable and it is hard to even imagine who will fill those jobs or what we would do without these workers. As the health care industry transforms its care delivery from inpatient to outpatient, there needs to be attention paid to how these workers are paid.

Auditor Bump noted during the release of the report that it shows that policymakers in the state have prioritized the right areas on which to focus, and encouraged them to use the analysis to guide future efforts related to addressing health care disparities in the Commonwealth.

OSA's Work Makes Headlines

[Audit finds UMass Memorial Medical Center failed to properly send reports on drug-dependent newborns to DCF](#)

This month, Auditor Bump released an audit of UMass Memorial Medical Center that found many substance-exposed newborns at the hospital were not properly reported to the Department of Children and Families (DCF).



Last month, as part of her office's efforts to hear from Massachusetts residents about their experiences interacting with government agencies, members of Auditor Bump's staff met with representatives from the Massachusetts Advocates of Children (MAC). During the meeting, the MAC representatives talked about ways to improve access to state programs—particularly for children with disabilities.

[Prostate cancer, infant deaths hit blacks most](#)

Auditor Bump's office released a report on the Chapter 224 law, which found that African-Americans are suffering from prostate cancer, infant deaths, and other health issues almost twice as much as the white population.

[Application delays for ill children to receive care poses a serious barrier to public health access](#)

In the first audit from her office examining barriers to access for public benefits programs, Auditor Bump's office found the Catastrophic Illness in Children Relief Fund took far too long to process applications for assistance covering costs not covered by a child's health insurance.

[Read more coverage of OSA's work](#)

Save the Date: Taxpayer Protection Act Regulations Hearing

Next month, the Office of the State Auditor will host a public hearing on new proposed regulations related to the Taxpayer Protection Act (also known as the Pacheco Law). These proposed regulations are intended to provide greater clarity and predictability when a state entity seeks to privatize public services. We will have more information on these proposed regulations in next month's edition of The Auditor's Report, but until then, be sure to save the date for this public hearing. It will be held on **Thursday, September 14th, at 10 a.m. on the [21st floor of the McCormack Building](#), in Conference Room 3.**

Accountability in Action: Nationwide Accountability in Boston

Last month, Auditor Suzanne Bump welcomed over 1,900 government accountability professionals to Boston for the Association of Government Accountants (AGA) Professional Development Training. This event provided three days of learning, networking, and sharing with individuals on the frontline of the efforts to make government work better. The event included state and federal officials from across the country, and even [from as far away as Guam](#).

During her welcoming remarks, Auditor Bump highlighted the role Massachusetts has played as a national leader. She touted the fact that the Commonwealth is home to many firsts, including the first public school, public library, university, and subway system. She also led a panel discussion about how the state's current fiscal situation is impacting public policy decisions.



Auditor Suzanne Bump provided the opening remarks at the annual Association of Government Accountants (AGA) Professional Development Training. She welcomed over 1,900 professionals from all over the country to Boston.

Auditor Bump has encouraged OSA participation in AGA activities as an opportunity for members of her team to hone their skills, and learn from and share their knowledge with colleagues across the country. She has also taken local and national leadership roles with the organization, serving as co-chair of the technical committee for the conference held in Boston, as well as previously serving as the president of the Boston chapter of the AGA.

Participation in these activities not only serve as an opportunity to continue our state's legacy of leadership in government accountability, but also ensure that the OSA team has the latest training and capacity to make government work better for the residents of the Commonwealth.

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