

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



[Office of the State Auditor](#)
Massachusetts State House
Room 230
617-727-2075
[@MassAuditor](#)

Dear Friend,

Vice President Joe Biden famously said, "Don't tell me what you value, show me your budget, and I'll tell you what you value." Last month, while debating and passing its budget, the Massachusetts Senate made clear that it shares my office's value of accountability and commitment to making government work better.

Beyond the dollars and cents, the budget takes an important policy step to improve state government accountability to municipal governments. Senator Kathleen O'Connor-Ives brought forward an amendment to the budget, which was adopted, that requires state agencies to file municipal impact statements with our Division of Local Mandates (DLM), the Department of Housing and Community Development, and the Local Government Advisory Committee when adopting, amending, or repealing regulations. This will allow DLM to provide feedback on proposed changes to help state agencies reduce unintended financial burdens on local governments. This measure was recommended in the [Five-year Statutory Review](#) released by my office last spring. A companion amendment was also brought forward in the House by Representative Theodore Speliotis, but was not adopted in that version of the budget.

In addition, the Senate budget also calls for accountability in the MassHealth program by directing the agency to take corrective action to address some of the deficiencies identified in our audits of the [Massachusetts Behavioral Health Partnership \(MBHP\)](#) and [Managed Care Organizations \(MCOs\)](#).

The two versions of the budget now go before a conference committee, where the differences will be ironed out before a final version is sent to the governor for his signature. My office will continue to work with lawmakers to ensure these important accountability measures are included in that final version.

Thank you,

Suzanne M. Bump
Auditor of the Commonwealth

Recent Audits

[Community Connection Healthcare, LLC](#)

[Review of Mandated Reports of Children Born with a Physical Dependence on An Addictive Drug at Lowell General Hospital](#)

[Massachusetts Technology Collaborative](#)

[View more audits](#)

Recent Press Releases

[Audit Recommends MassHealth Pursue Cost-Saving Improvements to Medication Administration](#)

[Bump Calls for Improved Reporting Process for Substance Exposed Newborns in Audit of Lowell General Hospital](#)

[Audit Finds Adequate Controls, Regulations, and Plans at Massachusetts Technology Collaborative](#)

[Auditor Bump's Statement on Governor Baker's Capital Plan](#)

[View more releases](#)



Auditor Bump met with representatives of the Children's Law Center last month to discuss the work of her office, and to hear their insights into how government is properly protecting children, and where improvements can be made.

OSA Focus: Protecting Children

Auditor Bump has instilled in the OSA a deep conviction that children of the Bay State should have access to services and programs that promote their health, safety, and well-being. Audits from her office have helped to strengthen protocols at the [Department of Early Education and Care](#) to ensure it regularly checks the state's Sex Offender Registry for matches with licensed daycare providers, led to improvement in accountability and transparency at [educational collaboratives](#), and raised awareness of the effectiveness of the state's [childhood obesity prevention efforts](#). All of this work has shown that when agencies work together and think outside the box about solutions, government can do more to protect Massachusetts' children.

However, few audits struck a chord like the audit of the [Department of Children and Families \(DCF\) foster care](#) system that was released in 2014. The audit came in the middle of a series of incidents in which children under DCF supervision were harmed after falling through the cracks of the system that was designed to protect them. The audit highlighted systemic issues within the agency, as well as the need for greater coordination and communication between the many state agencies – like MassHealth and DCF - that protect children.

As part of its effort to improve child protections, last month, Bump's office released the first in a series of audits examining hospital compliance with reporting requirements for substance exposed newborns. Under state law, hospitals are required to immediately report to DCF when a child is born exposed to drugs, and then must follow that with a written report within 48 hours. However, the audit of Lowell General Hospital found that in approximately 9 percent of these incidents, reports are not filed within this timeframe. Staff at the hospital noted that the reporting system in place currently relies on paper and faxes, rather than using digital reporting to streamline the process and improve compliance. Auditor Bump called for DCF to improve its reporting processes and technology for these incidents.

This deficiency is about more than paperwork. According to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, substance exposed newborns are already at a high risk of receiving improper treatment and care. This risk increases when incidents are not properly reported.

Through audits, legislation, and greater public awareness, the Bay State has undoubtedly made significant strides in protecting its most vulnerable residents. However, as the audit of Lowell General Hospital shows, there is significant work that remains to be done.

OSA's Work Makes Headlines

[Our view: Vigilance and welfare benefits](#)

The Gloucester Daily Times highlights the Bureau of Special Investigations ongoing efforts to crack down on merchants who take advantage of those receiving public benefits.

[Auditor's report finds MassHealth over paid nursing facilities](#)

An audit found that over a four-and-a-half year period, MassHealth did not recover \$639,445 of over payments to nursing facilities, reports WWLP-22 News.



Auditor Bump joined Jon Keller in the studio to discuss her office's efforts to improve government accountability, particularly in the MassHealth Program. Watch the [interview here](#).

[State audit finds no issues with Massachusetts Broadband Institute's project management](#)

The Massachusetts Broadband Institute is operating with proper financial controls and project oversight, according to a recent audit that reviewed two year's of the quasi-public agency's operations, reports the Berkshire Eagle.

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

Upcoming Events

State Auditor Suzanne M. Bump attends the National State Auditors Association Annual Convention, June 13-16, Bally's Atlantic City Hotel, Atlantic City, NJ.

Like what you read?
Subscribe at
[Mass.gov/Auditor](https://www.mass.gov/Auditor) or
use your smartphone
to scan this code



Questions or concerns about this newsletter? Email us at media@sao.state.ma.us.

Accountability in Action: The Revenue Accountability Act

Earlier this year, Auditor Bump announced the [Accountability Agenda](#) — her slate of legislation aimed at building public trust in government by ensuring tax dollars are spent effectively, state government is leveraging technology to improve performance, public assets are protected, and lawmakers have the information they need to make informed decisions.

Access to data is a key component of all of the Office of the State Auditor's (OSA) work. While the OSA has worked with auditees to gain access to their data in order to conduct audits, state law prohibits OSA from accessing information contained in tax returns to assess how well state agencies are performing. Thirty-seven other state government auditing entities around the country have access to this type of data. A central part of the Accountability Agenda — the [Revenue Accountability Act](#)—will add Massachusetts to that list.



Auditor Bump's Revenue Accountability Act would grant the OSA access to tax return data and be an important tool to enable the agency to assess how well state agencies are performing.

Under this measure—which is currently awaiting a hearing in the Joint Committee on Revenue — the OSA would use this information to conduct audits of state agencies. For example, this measure will allow the OSA to ensure agencies that provide public assistance are verifying the income of an applicant for benefits to make sure the individual qualifies for the program—something the OSA currently cannot do independently.

Additionally, the Revenue Accountability Act will allow to OSA to ensure that the Department of Revenue (DOR) is garnishing the tax returns of individuals who are delinquent on child support payments, and properly remitting local sales taxes to municipalities.

These examples are striking, but they are just the tip of the iceberg. If enacted, the Revenue Accountability Act will provide a powerful tool for the OSA to ensure state agencies are living up to their responsibilities, and acting with accountability.

OSA Legislation on the Move

A bit of good news out of the State House last month: two pieces of the OSA's [Accountability Agenda](#)— [The Accountability for Taxpayer Assets Act \(H6\)](#) and [The Accountability Through Data Access Act \(H7\)](#)— were favorably released from the Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight. They are now pending in the House Committee on Ways and Means.



Copyright © 2017 Office of the State Auditor, All rights reserved.
The Auditor's Report

Our mailing address is:
Massachusetts State House, Room 230, Boston, MA 02133

You are receiving this email because you have previously received correspondence from the Office of the State Auditor.

Want to change how you receive these emails? You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#)