

Special Commission on Access to Behavioral Health Services for Children and Families

Meeting Minutes

May 20, 2026

9:30 - 11:00 am

Date of meeting: Wednesday, May 20, 2026

Start time: 9:30 am

End time: 10:40 am

Location: Virtual Meeting (Zoom)

Member Votes		Present	Vote 1*	Vote 2*
1	Amy Rosenthal – Executive Office of Health and Human Service (<i>Chair</i>)	X	X	X
2	Lauren Almeida – Department of Children and Families (DCF)	X	A	X
3	Kevin Beagan – Division of Insurance (DOI)	X	X	-
4	Carmel Craig – Association for Behavioral Health (ABH)	X	X	X
5	Rachel Gwaltney – Children’s League of Massachusetts	-	-	-
6	Paul Hyry-Dermith – Bridge Resilient Youth in Transition, Brookline Center for Community Mental Health	X	A	X
7	Robyn Kennedy – Massachusetts Senate	-	-	-
8	Jessica Larochelle – Mass Association for Mental Health (MAMH)	X	X	X
9	David Matteodo – Mass Association of Behavioral Health Systems (MABHS)	X	X	X
10	Kristen McKinnon – Student and Family Support, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE)	X	X	X
11	Lisa Morrow – Health Law Advocates	X	X	X
12	Lee Robinson – Office of Accountable Care & Behavioral Health, MassHealth	X	X	-
13	Pam Sager – Parent/Professional Advocacy League (PPAL)	X	X	X
14	Leigh Simons – Mass Health and Hospital Association (MHA)	-	-	-
15	Aimee Smith-Zeoli – Department of Early Education and Care (EEC)	-	-	-
16	Charlene Zuffante – Child, Youth, & Family Services, DMH	X	X	X

* (X) Voted in favor; (O) Opposed; (A) Abstained from vote; (-) Absent from meeting or during vote

Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Approval of 4/29/2026 Meeting Minutes
3. Overview of Rural Innovation for Systems Change & Effectiveness
4. Update from Single Agency Workgroup
5. Continued Discussion of Commission's Recommendations
6. Next Steps

Proceedings

Undersecretary Rosenthal called the meeting to order at 9:30 am. She welcomed members and reminded them that the Commission meeting is subject to the Open Meeting Law and that all votes taken during the meeting would be conducted via roll-call vote.

Vote 1 to approve the 4/29/2026 meeting minutes: Undersecretary Rosenthal requested a motion to approve the minutes from the Commission's previous meeting on 4/29/2026. Carmel Craig introduced the motion, which was seconded by Charlene Zuffante and approved by roll-call vote (see detailed record of votes above).

Arianne Henry, Director of Policy with EOHHS, presented an overview of the Rural Innovation for Systems Change and Effectiveness (RISE) initiative, a newly-launched cross-agency initiative to improve access to appropriate care for high-needs youth and young adults with complex behavioral, developmental, and medical needs. In her presentation, she noted that the initiative seeks to transform how rural Massachusetts serves youth and young adults with complex needs, which will require sustained executive attention to budget, legislation, governance, staffing, implementation success, and long-term sustainability.

Commission member Lee Robinson provided an overview of the revised set of draft recommendations, on which members had shared written feedback since the Commission's last meeting. He reiterated that the recommendations were framed under four specific policy areas (workforce, payment policy, state agency coordination, and front-door access/navigation of care), with two overarching policy goals (family-centered design and equity accountability) that permeate the policy areas. In the discussion following the presentation, members offered specific suggestions for the policy framework and recommendations.

Lee Robinson walked members through the summary of draft recommendations which would require significant new investments from the state, highlighting the general buckets in which the recommendations were grouped: those warranting further study and infrastructure investments. In the discussion, Lee highlighted that the draft recommendations were kept intentionally broad and all-inclusive to avoid locking state agencies in with overly-specific commitments.

In summarizing next steps, Undersecretary Rosenthal proposed that members review the list of recommendations requiring state investment and share written feedback with Commission staff by Tuesday, 5/26.

Undersecretary Rosenthal summarized an outline for the Commission's draft report, consisting of:

1. Overview of the Commission's process (review of prior reports, formation of workgroups, etc.)
2. Overarching recommendations (Slide #3)
3. Additional details and examples for each of the recommendations
4. Policy recommendations requiring state investment (with a clear call-out regarding impact, feasibility, and current budgetary climate)
5. Potential spotlight section on overlap and continuum with BHHL / RISE / IRT
6. Appendix with workgroup products

She requested that, ahead of the Commission's final meeting scheduled for June 3, any members interested in continuing the work of the Commission and staying engaged in any follow-on work reach out to Commission staff.

At 10:30 am, Kevin Beagan and Lee Robinson left the meeting.

Vote 2 to adjourn the meeting: Undersecretary Rosenthal requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. Kristen McKinnon introduced the motion, which was seconded by Carmel Craig and approved by roll-call vote (see detailed record of votes above).

The meeting was adjourned at 10:40 am.

Meeting Materials

1. Draft 4/29/2026 meeting minutes
2. Updated draft of recommendations
3. Recommendations requiring state investment