



**Cape Cod & Islands Commission on the Status of Women  
Annual Report  
2018**

Cape Cod & Islands Commission on the Status of Women  
Commissioners

Debbie Bryant, Bourne, Archivist (*resigned as of April 2018*)

Katia Regina Dacunha, Hyannis

Marie Doubleday, Oak Bluffs

Penelope Duby, Chair (*resigned as of April 2018*)

Tina Games, Harwich,

Susan Gardner, Falmouth, Recording Secretary

Laura Innis, Hatchville

Tracy Johnson, Brewster

Lisa Malcolm, Osterville

Lisa McNeill, Yarmouth Port

Liz Rabideau, West Barnstable: Vice Chair

Joan Walsh-Freedman, South Yarmouth: Treasurer

Marie Younger-Blackburn, Mashpee

Emerita Commissioners

Helen Bresnahan, Pocasset

Janet Joakim, Centerville

**Purpose:**

The Cape Cod and Islands Commission on the Status of Women was enacted by law and established in 2009 to advance women toward full equity in all areas of life and to promote rights and opportunities for all women.

The mission of the Cape Cod and Islands Commission on the Status of Women is to provide a permanent, effective voice for women across Barnstable, Dukes and Nantucket Counties that facilitates and fosters community and inclusiveness among women. The Commission stands for fundamental freedoms, basic human rights and the full enjoyment of life for all women throughout their lives.

The Commission is comprised of thirteen appointed women who have had prior experience working toward the improvement of the status of women. Commissioners are drawn from diverse racial, ethnic, religious, age, sexual orientation, and socio-economic backgrounds from throughout Cape Cod & the Islands. The Commission meets 10 (at least 6) times a year at the members' discretion.

### **The Commission is empowered to:**

- Study, review and report on the status of women on the Cape and Islands;
- Inform leaders of business, education, health care, state and local governments and the communications media of issues pertaining to women;
- Serve as a clearinghouse for information on issues pertaining to women;
- Identify and recommend qualified women for appointive positions at all levels of government, including boards and commissions;
- Promote and facilitate collaboration among local women's commissions and among women's organizations in the state.

### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Commission is to advance women toward full equity in all areas of life and to promote rights and opportunities for women.

The commission meets ten times each year. It is expected that commissioners attend as many meetings as possible with absences over three requiring a conversation about cause.

Meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month from September through June from 5:00-7:00 PM

September 13th - Harwich Community Center, 100 Oak St., Harwich

October 11th - Sandwich Public Library, 142 Main St., Sandwich, Room 1

November 8th - Yarmouth PD, 340 Higgins Crowell Rd., West Yarmouth

December 13th - Barnstable County Complex, Harbor View Room, 3195 Main St., Barnstable

January 10th - Yarmouth PD, 340 Higgins Crowell Rd., West Yarmouth

February 14th - Barnstable County Complex, Harborview Room, 3195 Main St., Barnstable

March 14th - Falmouth Library Trustees' Room 300 Main Street, Falmouth

April 11th - Barnstable County Complex, Harborview Room, 3195 Main St., Barnstable

May9 – Eastham Community Development Space

June13: Bourne Community Center

### **STATUS**

During 2018, CCICSW achieved a full complement of commissioners for the first time in several years. We elected a full slate of officers in January of 2017. We reviewed and revised our by-laws to include new responsibilities for our vice-chair (**Appended**) CCICSW reappointed Tina Games, Marie Doubleday and Susan Gardner in January 2018. Liz Rabideau was elected as the new Vice

Chair. Joan Walsh-Freedman was re-elected as Treasurer and Susan Gardner was re-elected as Secretary. In April two commissioners tendered their resignation, Penelope Duby and Debbie Bryant. The CCICSW in conjunction with MCSW will work to fill these two positions following the protocols of the membership protocols and bylaws.

## **LISTENING AND REPORTING**

We spent considerable time this year collecting data to inform our future work.

### **Listening**

#### **Survey Summer 2017:**

We completed a survey with over 700 respondents across the Cape and Islands (Appended) During the months of July, August, and September – the commission conducted an online survey of challenges and needs of women on Cape Cod, Martha's Vineyard, and Nantucket with the results guiding CCICSW's advocacy, programming, and legislative priorities for the next two years. A survey summary was written and shared with the State Commission.

#### **Hearing November 2017:**

A hearing was held on November 17, 2017 at Cape Cod Community College in Barnstable. While this was an open hearing, it had a special focus on healthcare concerns since that was the number one issue that came from the results of our survey. A hearing summary was compiled and shared with local Commissioners and with the State Commission.

### **Reporting**

#### **What we learned as a result of the 2017 Survey and Hearings: (Full Reports in Appendix)**

Women who live on Cape Cod and the Islands' lives continue to be complicated and compromised by critical housing shortages, seasonal employment issues, lack of adequate transportation and access to services.

Specific concerns that came to light as a result of our outreach through our survey, regional hearing and the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women highlighted another layer of issues that affect women's wellbeing. We have summarized these concerns in the following report.

Women have deep and continuing concerns about three general domains of health-related issues: **Mental health, substance use and women's health issues, including maternal, reproductive and sex education.**

Each domain (mental health, women's health including maternal, reproductive care and education) is subject to a constellation of problems including and illustrated by the following list of concerns and examples of difficulties noted by the respondents:

- **Access to and Availability of Local Providers**, (Shortage of specialist care, detox and pediatric emergency and critical care facilities, transitional care services)

- **Affordability of Care** (Insurance issues, lack of coverage, block grants, assistance with copays and deductibles)
- **Quality of Available Programs** (Legislation and regulation, awareness of certifications and staffing qualifications, confidentiality issues, transitional programs)
- **Coordination of Available Programs** (Continuity of care and communication across care and ‘step down’ programs, ‘cracks’, funding issues, critical need for navigators)
- **Community Awareness** (Common understanding, reduction of stigma, visibility, safety and security education)
- **Supports Available for Patients and Caregivers**(FMLA, transport, education, vocational support, housing advocacy)
- **Legislative Supports** (To foster coordination, regulation, parity, added value for collaboration across services and programs)

These overarching health concerns are influenced by social determinants of health such as:

1. Safety: freedom from violence,
2. Security: housing, food, and utilities
3. Connection to family, community and services
4. Communication, access to telephone, internet, health networks
5. Parity of Access to Quality Care by age, race, region
6. Transportation, insurance and fuel
7. Factors relative to age

The Cape Cod and Islands Commission on the Status of Women will use this data in our planning for legislative support, outreach and program planning for our work in the coming year.

## **ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE & COMMITTEES**

### **Procedures and protocols**

As a relatively new group of Commissions we spent time working on our procedures, protocols, communications and committee structures. We worked to negotiate issues around meeting attendance, meeting conduct to ensure all voices are heard and to make efficient use of our meeting time. We both formed and defined committees. Our Organization Chart was helpful and important to defining our roles. (Protocol and Org Chart appended) ATTACHED

### **Committee reports**

**Program Planning Committee:** Under the guidance of Tina Games the committee during the months of July, August, and September conducted a survey of challenges and needs of women on Cape Cod, Martha's Vineyard, and Nantucket with the results guiding CCICSW's advocacy, programming, and legislative priorities for the next two years. A survey summary was written and shared with local Commission members and with the State Commission. An open hearing, with a special focus on was held on November 17, 2107. A hearing summary was compiled and shared

with local Commissioners and with the State Commission. The committee is planning a spring Commission Retreat in June 2018 with the theme of *visibility*, inviting Commissioners to think about ways we can be more visible in our communities, to the women we want to serve, to our legislators, to potential partnering organizations, and to each other.

**Finance Committee:** Under the direction of Joan Walsh-Freedman we explored the possibility of partnering (as a fiscal agent) with a local foundation in order to create a ‘Friends of CCICSW’ Platform. A meeting was held on May 11 with the aim of creating a fund that could be used to support our mission. Further discussions are suspended pending information and direction from the state office. Discussions with the State office yielded information on protocols and procedures for creating fundraising entities for Regional Commissions. With the regional input MSCW will be directing the path for funding opportunities and procedures for compliance with State law and regulations.

**Legislative Committee:** Under the direction of Susan Gardner has reviewed the MCSW Legislative Priorities and have determined that CCICSW’s choice of legislation of:

Priority Legislation for the 2017-2018 General Legislative Session included:

- S 499 Advancing Contraceptive Coverage and Economic Security in our State (ACCESS) Passed
- S946/H.978 Housing Court Expansion Passed
- S1048 Establishing a Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program
- S785/H2310 End Child Marriage in Massachusetts
- S1000 Establishing Just Schedules for Employees

Supported Legislation for the 2017-2018 General Legislative Session included:

- S545.H482 Providing for Equitable Coverage in Disability Policies
- S788/HD2873 Protect Girls from Female Genital Mutilation
- S1023/H1048 Establishing a Massachusetts Pregnant Workers Fairness Act Passed

We also identified the immediate opportunity to support legislation for Housing Court Expansion and wrote letters of support for the hearing on April 13, and letters to the President of the House of Representatives, and Chairs of the Joint Judiciary Committees, copied to all Cape & Islands Legislators, all of whom have supported the legislation.

Ongoing letters of support and notices of hearings on the above bills will be shared with commissioners.

**Community and Public Relations:** Under the leadership of Tracy Johnson, we developed our ‘elevator speech’ format for our mission, purpose and tasks. We established a calendar of meeting locations for the Cape & Islands for 2017-18 in order to make our process available to a broader cross-section of the public. The committee reviewed our digital/online presence and made recommendations for postings and updates. Looking ahead the committee will take advantage of the State’s website capabilities and determine the appropriate course for CCICSW’s website. The committee will work with the group to understand and execute on the results of the Spring retreat with the emphasis on our *visibility* in the community.

**Outreach:** Under the direction of Lisa McNeill the Outreach committee convened and discussed the needs of the community and the role of outreach in meeting those needs. A particular focus was made to creating more opportunities for the Cape and Island's Brazilian community to participate in our hearings and survey's. Discussion within the committee, with elected officials and community organizations was done in an effort to determine the availability of translations services for hearings. The result was CCICSW was able to provide translation for some community members at the MCSW hearing in March. Members will attend Advocacy Day on May 16<sup>th</sup>. Commissioners will also continue to collect local contact information to expand our plans to partner with other women's groups on Cape & Islands to support women's engagement and disseminate information.

## **ACTIVITIES AND COMMUNITY PRESENCE**

- We were represented at the Regional MCSW Commissioners' Convening, Cape Women's Coalition's International Women's Day Breakfast, the International Women's Day Luncheon of the Falmouth Jewish Center, the Yarmouth Senior Center's Women's Month Meeting, MCSW March 2018 Hearing in Barnstable and our chair was awarded the Cornerstone Award by the Barnstable County Human Rights Commission and given citations from state and federal legislators for her work on women's issues.
- We expanded the reach of the commission by having both Portuguese and Spanish translators available for our hearing thanks to Katia Regina Dacunha, one of our commissioners.
- We attempted to determine the feasibility of forming a 'Friends of the Cape Cod & Islands Commission on the Status of Women'.
- Commissioners attended the Investing in Girls Alliance for the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Statewide Gathering on Girls on May 12, 2017.
- There will be a June Commission Retreat inviting Commissioners to think about ways we can be more supportive to our communities, to the women we want to serve, to our legislators, and encourage potential partnering organizations, and encourage collaboration around women's issues.

## **GOALS FOR CCICSW - 2018**

Our goals for the remainder of 2018 and for 2019 will be reviewed and solidified through our June 2018 Retreat. With this in mind the Commissioners of CCICSW have determined through prior discussion that:

- Increasing the *Visibility* of our work, in and for the community, needs to be addressed
- That as an all-volunteer organization we need to be realistic in our goals and scope of work
- That *Listening and Reporting* are our main objectives
- That working as a team and making an impact in our community is a priority