Gov.’s H2 budget reflects Administration priorities

Gov. Charlie Baker opened the Fiscal Year ’17 budget process on Jan. 27 by proposing a $39.6 billion House 2 budget that invests in key human services programs including behavioral health and addiction, children and family services, job training and education.

H2 also upholds the governor’s campaign promise to fully fund Chapter 257, and the Governor noted a proposed “$50 million in new spending for human service providers governed by Chapter 257 across several [Health and Human Services] line items” in his budget message.

The budget proposal also transfers funding or consolidates line items in several areas, and the Providers’ Council is monitoring how these moves may affect provider contracts. Most notable among these moves is the transfer of funding for domestic violence services from the Department of Children and Families to the Department of Public Health. There are changes in MassHealth funding that will require more study too.

Both EOHHS Secretary Marylou Sudders and DPH Commissioner Monica Bharel, on a call with stakeholders after H2 was released, stated there would be no decrease in service level for victims of domestic violence and the move was to better align services. H2 also creates a new Quality Improvement line item within the Department of Early Education and Care that is funded at $33.4 million, including $8 million moved out of Services for Infants and Parents line item.

“Overall we are pleased with what the Governor has presented in H2,” said Providers’ Council President & CEO Michael Weekes. “There are a few areas where we are seeking clarification, especially with regard to moving domestic violence services, the allocation for CIES, and the changes in MassHealth and Early Education and Care.”

While the budget pledged additional money for job creation, it notes the challenge in the current climate of reduced federal funding. The council is monitoring how these moves may affect human service programs.

Advocacy in action:
IRS backs down

The Treasury Department and Internal Revenue Service announced January 7 that they are withdrawing the proposed Gift Substantiation regulation that was opposed by nonprofits across the country.

The Providers’ Council joined national partners the National Council of Nonprofits and some members in opposing the proposed regulations, which would have permitted, but not required, charitable nonprofits to file a new, separate information return with the IRS (in addition to the Form 990) to substantiate contributions of more than $250 in value.

The new document would have required the nonprofit using it to collect each donor’s name, address and Social Security number or other taxpayer ID.

Save the date!
GIC testimony well-received by committee

The Caring Force rolls into 2016 more than 20K strong

The Caring Force rolls into 2016 more than 20K strong

Kiriya Zihalirwa believes that being part of a human service advocacy movement is a way of showing that you care.

And she should know: The individual support specialist for people with developmental disabilities was the 20,000th member of The Caring Force, helping the grassroots advocacy movement win its Race to 20K.

“Everyone can give back to the community,” said Zihalirwa, who works for Bay Cove Human Services. “If you don’t have money, you may have time, connections, knowledge or just a smile. Working with individuals living with lifelong challenges of developmental disabilities has taught me about humility. We all have our own challenges, and everyone deserves the best quality of life.”

Those beliefs embody the spirit of The Caring Force, which has a mission of empowering those who care about the human services sector in Massachusetts and fostering respect for the individuals served as well as workforce.

“The success of the Race to 20K and growth of The Caring Force comes at a time when the need for our work is more acute, and the power of advocacy is needed more than ever,” said Aimee Coolidge of Pine Street Inn, in red, and Marilyn Lopez-Haddad of Seven Hills Foundation and Providers’ Council CEO Michael Weekes, support of House Bill 891, which would allow provider organizations to join the Group Insurance Commission.

at Seven Hills Foundation, told the committee that the organization’s health insurance costs have doubled since 2009, jumping from $7 million to $14 million. Approximately 1,000 of Seven Hills’ 3,700 employees have insurance through the agency. She also noted that many others choose to go on

SUPPORT, see page 7

The Caring Force rolls into 2016 more than 20K strong
JRI announces Herold as chief information officer

Justice Resource Institute, a provider of trauma-informed care to children and families in Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut, has appointed Roody Herold as chief information officer.

Herold, originally from Haiti and a resident of Brockton, is a highly accomplished information technology executive. Most recently, he was chief information officer and business transformation officer for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts’ Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, where he was responsible for directing all aspects of technology and business transformation processes.

Prior to that he was the chief information officer at the Executive Office, where he oversaw all IT operations for the secretariat and its 1,600 employees.

Herold holds a bachelor’s degree in electrical engineering technology from Louisiana Tech University, a graduate diploma in professional accounting and an MBA from Suffolk University. He also earned a Master of Arts in urban ministry leadership from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary.

Dineen named interim ED at YWCA of Western Mass.

Elisabeth G. Dineen, an attorney with Springfield-based law firm Egan, Flanagan & Cohen, has been tapped to serve as acting executive director of the YWCA of Western Massachusetts, effective Jan. 2, 2016. Dineen succeeds Mary Reardon Johnson, who has retired.

Throughout her 27-year career as a prosecutor, Dineen was known as a strong advocate for women and children, focusing primarily on sexual assaults and crimes against children.

After leaving the district attorney’s office, she served as assistant district attorney for the Department of Criminal Justice at Bay Path University in Longmeadow and currently is president-elect of the Hampden County Bar Association.

Her long legal career has earned her accolades along the way, including the Top Women of Law award; the Massachusetts Governor’s Award for Service to the Commonwealth, the YWCA Women of Distinction award; and the Massachusetts Bar Association’s Access to Justice Award, Prosecutor of the Year in 2003.

Headquartered in Springfield, the YWCA offers programs in Northampton, Westfield and Holyoke.

Advocates names SVP for administrative operations

Justice Resource Institute’s Advocates, Inc. announced Regina Marshall has been appointed senior vice president for administrative operations.

Marshall is a resident of Framingham, has a broad range of experience as a legal advocate and administrator at both the executive and operational levels of state government.

She holds a bachelor’s degree in political science and African American studies from Simmons College and a law degree from Northeastern University.

Most recently, Marshall was center director of the Massachusetts Mental Health Center, which serves more than 1,200 clients. She was responsible for all clinical and administrative operations there.

Seven Hills promotes Courtney to vice president

The Seven Hills Foundation has appointed Leslie Courtney as a new vice president to oversee the organization’s expanding shared living program and other family support programs.

Courtney will oversee programs including the Adult Family/Foster Care (AFC) and regional Family Support Centers.

Courtney joined Seven Hills in 2009 and most recently served as an assistant vice president at Seven Hills Family & Children’s Services.

Additionally, the Worcester Business Journal recently recognized Seven Hills Foundation President and CEO David Jordan as a Central Massachusetts Power Player. WBJ’s annual list includes five categories and Jordan is recognized as a Visionary, “forward thinkers who realize the promises of the future.”

Gov. appoints Cassetta to Workforce Investment Board

Work Inc. President and CEO James Cassetta has been appointed to serve on the Massachusetts Workforce Investment Board. The appointment was made by Governor Charlie Baker. Cassetta was sworn in at the Statehouse on Jan. 5.

The MWIB, which is made up from the public and private sector and represents a wide range of businesses in the Commonwealth, meets four times a year with the governor to develop strategies to guide the state’s efforts in ensuring workers in all sectors of the economy have the skills they need to fill the jobs of the future.

Cassetta has been the president and CEO of WORK Inc. for the last 15 years. During his tenure, the organization has trained and placed thousands of adults with disabilities into jobs that were a perfect match upon their varying levels of skills and intellectual competencies.

Several members earn spot among Top Workplaces

Several member organizations were recognized as top places to work in a story year-end feature, “Top Workplaces” as one of the top 25 small businesses in the state. Bay Cove Human Services was No. 16 and Justice Resource Institute was No. 21 in the Largest Employers category of the Globe list.

And North of Boston Business magazine named American Training, Inc. as a top workplace.

Bay Cove was also honored by the group English for New Bootonians for its English language training programs offered in partnership with the Haitian Multi-Service Center. Bay Cove was one of seven businesses recognized at the “Raising Our Voices: Recognizing ESOL Leadership in Business and the Community” event.

Several Council members receive grants to end 2015

The Cambridge Community Foundation announced grants totaling $580,475 for 73 nonprofits that focus on economic opportunity, education, hunger and homelessness, arts and culture, civic engagement, the elderly, the environment and the underserved.

Members receiving grants include Cambridge Family & Children Service, which received a $10,000 award from Citizens Bank.

The award was recognized as one of the year’s most generous gifts, who has demonstrated exceptional commitment, energy and enthusiasm toward work assisting individuals and families who are experiencing poverty in community-based settings.

Nelson was honored during the 4th Annual Stephanie Moulton Symposium at the JFK Library in Boston.
High Point is one of the largest and most comprehensive providers of addiction and mental health services in the state. Programs include Brockton Addiction Treatment Center, Brockton Addiction Treatment Center for men and women offering detox and clinical stabilization services; CASTLE, a short-term stabilization program for youth ages 13-17; an outpatient clinic; and the Brockton Mayor’s Opioid Overdose Prevention Coalition, which, in collaboration with High Point provides education, support, and referrals to opiate users and their families. The Brockton Mayor’s Opioid Overdose Prevention Coalition provides a helpful approach to substance misuse and abuse prevention in the state, an Opioid Treatment Program and a primary care clinic.

The Fall River Family Center provides emergency shelter for seven families. In Middleborough, programs include a 72-bed psychiatric hospital for adults and adolescents and an outpatient clinic. New Bedford programs include the Women’s Addiction Treatment Center; New Daughters, a 22-bed women’s residential recovery home; Harbour House Family Center, a 16-family emergency shelter; Harmony House, the Family Preservation Program, (a HUD-funded permanent housing project with case management services); Reflections CAP, a court-alternative program for men and women; and two outpatient clinics. Also located here are New Bedford TSS, a program which bridges the gap between detoxification and step down services to residential aftercare; Monarch House (21-bed residential program for women age 18 and older recovering from a substance use disorder and related co-occurring issues); Wraparound House (11-bed residential program for women recovering from a substance use disorder and related or co-occurring issues); Little Thistle House, the 26-bed residential recovery treatment program for men 21 and older recovering from a substance use disorder; Unity House, a low-threshold permanent housing program for men, and affordable housing.

The programs on the Plymouth campus include a Dual Diagnosis Unit, Detox and Clinical Stabilization Services, in addition to an outpatient clinic. The outpatient clinic is located in downtown Plymouth, as is the South Shore Women’s Addiction Treatment Center (outpatient clinic).

Regionally, Community Support Program and Children’s Behavioral Health Initiative services are offered at outpatient clinics. The Batterers’ Intervention Program is in Greater New Bedford, Wareham, and Plymouth. The SHARES program provides services in Bristol and Plymouth counties to individuals and their families who have been victims of assault to the hibical domicile. Our First Defender (DAE) and Second Defender Aftercare programs are in Greater New Bedford. High Point is also affiliated with the South Shore Women’s Addiction Treatment Center and Taunton, with DAE also in Wareham. A 28-bed Section 35 residential program for women will begin operations in mid-2015 in Middleborough.

Daniel S. Mumbauer is the President and CEO of High Point and its two affiliate organizations, South Shore Family Services and SEMCOA (Southeast Massachusetts Council on Addiction). Mumbauer has worked in the behavioral health field for more than 30 years, serving as president and CEO for over 20 years. He has co-founded, acquired, affiliated, dissolved and reorganized numerous nonprofit programs and corporations. In his current capacity, he oversees a fullcontinuum ofcare, encompassing behavioral health and addiction services. These include a 72-bed psychiatric hospital for adults and adolescents, seven outpatient mental health and substance abuse programs, multiple recovery homes, three family shelters, a domestic violence center, an opioid treatment program and a primary care clinic. Under Mumbauer’s leadership, organizational revenue has increased from just under $3 million to over $70 million.

Hayward has walked in their shoes

Since joining Vinfen in 2011, Recovery Coordinator Audrey Hayward has used her education and background as a person with lived experience to transform the lives of countless people with psychiatric conditions.

Each day, Hayward builds and maintains a professional rapport with the people she serves in order to help them gain the confidence, skills and resources they need to establish and succeed in self-determined goals.

Certified as a peer specialist and Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) facilitator, Hayward is a valuable resource for clients in need of guidance and support from the perspective of someone who has been in her shoes.

“We’re trained to very intentionally tell our story, and do it in a way to help inspire hope, to make people feel more of a connection and feel less alone in what they’re going through,” Hayward said.

To help improve Vinfen services, Hayward teamed up with her peers to create a workshop, teaching staff tangible skills to help change their perception of clients and eliminate the natural biases that arise in the provider-client relationship.

“Vinfen is experiencing the concepts of hope and resiliency through recovery,” said Vinfen Director of Recovery Services Lisa Halpern.

“She is a steadfast advocate for the

Martinez uses experience to lead the team

Wayside Youth & Family Support Network’s (Wayside) Community Services Agency (CSA) established a program in Lowell in 2013, they didn’t hire a new leader for the first hire.

Awilda Martinez, who had received Wraparound services from a CSA for one of her foster children, was hired as the program’s first family partner. She had strong family and cultural knowledge, a low-threshold program for women recovering from a substance use disorder and related or co-occurring issues, Harmony House, a 26-bed residential recovery treatment program for men 21 and older recovering from a substance use disorder, Unity House, a low-threshold permanent housing program for men, and affordable housing.

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A strong example of the power of advocacy

A huge whoosh of exhalation swept through the nonprofit world on January 7th as organizations across the country exclaimed relief that the Internal Revenue Service and Treasury Department withdrew their proposed rule change to have nonprofits collect donor Social Security numbers.

This highly controversial proposal requested that nonprofits collect the names, addresses and Social Security numbers of their donors giving $500 or more of value and report them to the IRS. The Providers’ Council joined with nearly 38,000 other voices – like the National Council of Nonprofits, Goodwill, United Way, United Negro College Fund, Independent Sector, The Jewish Federations and Volunteers of America, to name a few – in sending missives strongly objecting to this IRS proposal issued last fall. The most pressing concern for nonprofits was safeguarding the Social Security numbers of its donors from theft and other nefarious activities. We couldn’t be happier that our collective advocacy forced the withdrawal of this proposal and advanced our sector’s ability to operate effectively and promote simple common sense in this rulemaking.

The National Council of Nonprofits, representing associations with more than 22,000 member organizations, decried, “The results of this rulemaking could put the IRS in a confusing, self-conflicting position: on the one hand, through the proposed rule the IRS is telling nonprofits that they are authorized to ask for individuals’ private Social Security numbers, while on the other hand the IRS currently warns taxpayers on its website and on a YouTube video to only give out their Social Security numbers when ‘absolutely necessary.’”

Further, we are struck that the IRS itself, perhaps overwhelmed with identity fraud matters, reported that “…billions of dollars in potentially fraudulent refunds continue to be paid as a result of identity theft.” In 2014, a Treasury deputy inspector estimated that at least $2.1 billion in fraudulent returns will be paid in the next five years “unless there is a major change. In one recent egregious example, the IRS allowed 2,000 refunds to go to a single address. And in June 2015, the IRS disclosed that through its website, the personal information of more than 100,000 taxpayers’ was stolen, generating $339 million in fraudulent refunds. It was later disclosed that another 220,000 identities were compromised in August.

This is not to dump on the IRS. The agency has very complex responsibilities and has been saddled with too few employees engaged in the daunting task of “knock down one problem area, thieves from around the world are trying to open other avenues. And it’s not just government; corporate identity theft through Target, Neiman Marcus, Sears and others is on the rise too.

But the loss of this government-protected sites are most worrisome because the federal government has spent billions to thwart attackers and they have failed to some extent. The federal Office of Personnel Management disclosed that hackers were able to access Social Security numbers from millions of employees records. The CIA, State Department and even the White House have had breaches where hackers obtained sensitive personnel information. In fact, the FBI’s website notes that “A stolen identity is a powerful cloak of anonymity for criminals and terrorists…” and a danger to national security and private citizens alike.

This underscores why it was so important that our sector defeat this proposed change. Not only is collecting the Social Security numbers of donors from a privacy standpoint, but it would also cost nonprofits immeasurable dollars to collect and attempt to safeguard this donor information. And while you will still have to file your tax returns and remain employed if your personal information is disclosed, nonprofits dependent on billions in contributions annually could be forced to close should donors walk away if there is a breach or even concern of a breach. And that matters a lot. According to the 2015 Giving USA Annual Report, charitable giving in 2014 totaled more than $335 billion, up over 7 percent from 2013, with human services as the third highest beneficiary behind religion and education. This funding is essential for many and it is especially important in our sector.

We can derive many lessons from this experience, but I believe three critical ones are:

1. The government and nonprofits should avoid collecting and/or using Social Security numbers unless “absolutely necessary.” As a nation, we do not currently have the technology or capability to protect them.
2. If government is contemplating new procedures or mandates for the nonprofit sector, officials should consult with the sector first to get its ideas, concerns and suggestions. It would be a lot easier to get a proposal right the first time if nonprofits are a part of the initial planning process.
3. The sector has once again exhibited its ability to collaborate and galvanize its power by advocating for the good of all.

We are fortunate to live in a nation where standing up to be heard matters. As one of the many organizations supporting our nation’s nonprofits, the Providers’ Council knows that is an essential part of our democracy. And as an aside, so is voting in our public elections. To do your part, make sure you are registered by Feb. 10 to vote in our March 1 Presidential Primary in Massachusetts. On behalf of our CureVote campaign, please make this a priority too.
Tale of two students: Learning, growing comes in many forms

By David Manzo

W hat makes a school a school for a child with special needs "inclusive"? For more than 10 years, I’ve watched two students in my life who primarily need special education succeed academically and socially while making critical gains in independence.

Brendon was the first. Coincidentally, they share the same first name - although spelled differently. Their educational paths took two different directions, but with the same winning results – a question when we considered the inclusion of equality.

Brendon D.’s parents chose to live in Newton because of Boston College and its outstanding special education services. Recently, Brendon turned 22, the age at which publicly-mandated services for students with special needs end. Brendon has been a model student, literate and able to ask the critical question: “Which school is the best fit for my unique needs?” For one, it was a public school setting; for the other, private. What makes a school “inclusive”?

Whether public or private, an “inclusive” school provides the opportunity for a student to be fully included academically and socially. It provides the opportunity for having friends, being invited to sleepovers and birthday parties, and helping or being helped. It means access to on-site services, which often include medical, communications, occupational and physical therapy. It means access to computer-aided design. It means these programs to help DTA clients compete in the workforce; the ESP budget has historically been focused on serving those who can support themselves, not those who serve others.

Jeff McCue is the commissioner of the Department of Transitional Assistance.

The importance of keeping kids in DYS out of the system

By Naoka Carey

F or people who work in child servi- ces, learning that many of the outcomes child welfare system were previously involved with the child welfare system is not a surprise. We know that the kinds of concerns that bring children to the attention of the Department of Children & Families (DCF) – abuse, neglect, unmet behav- ioral health needs, and poverty – also make children more likely to be involved in the juvenile justice system.

We believe that, given us that a num- ber of systemic factors – whether a child lives in a group home, their initial placement history and the kinds of services they receive – can also significa- ntly impact a child’s chances of end- ing up in the juvenile justice system. Placement disruption in particular is associated with a number of incredi- bly negative outcomes. Kids moving around in search of homes can be more traumatic to children than the abuse that brought them into the system was originally.

The juvenile justice system is nearly always a bad option for kids. Arrest and court cases are just one of many young person’s chances of dropping out of high school by 800 percent. If teens are arrested, the decision to try them as adults rather than as children is likely to stay with them for a lifetime. Sometimes kids respond to these hardships with behavior that can infla- tiate even the most compassionate adult. But no one who is dedicated to protecting kids can accept any place- ment that does not support their development and learning. Fortunately, there are many best practices we can adopt to prevent these kinds of life-altering in- stabilities.

Producers can play a critical role in diverting our most vulnerable young people away from the delinquency sys- tem. By ensuring that the response to their behavior is restorative rather than re- support instead of punish- ment, by educating themselves on the harms of system involvement. And by continuing to change the ways our systems need to promote the best possible out- comes for kids.

We cannot afford to be fatalistic about our children, and they cannot af- ford for us to give up on them. No child should be in a life that is tran- sient with unstable living situations, missing siblings, inadequate schools and traumatic life events. Sometimes kids respond to these hardships with behavior that can infla- tiate even the most compassionate adult. But no one who is dedicated to protecting kids can accept any place- ment that does not support their development and learning. Fortunately, there are many best practices we can adopt to prevent these kinds of life-altering in- stabilities.

Providers can play a critical role in diverting our most vulnerable young people away from the delinquency sys- tem. By ensuring that the response to their behavior is restorative rather than re- support instead of punish- ment, by educating themselves on the harms of system involvement. And by continuing to change the ways our systems need to promote the best possible out- comes for kids.

Providing the opportunity to learn alongside his typically de- veloping peers. He has a successful community work placement at their transition party, Brendan gave a

The families of Brendan and Brendon were dedi- cated to their children. Sarah is employed and travels independently to work. She supports her family through employment. Without a doubt, the ESP program has enabled Sarah and her family to live up to their full potential. We have seen the success of ESP in providing meaningful support and opportunities to our community partners in furthering meaningful engagement with clients, which translates into true self-suffi- ciency and economic independence.

Jeff McCue is the commissioner of the Department of Transitional Assistance.

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A View from the Hill
A commentary from a legislator on human services

Many steps being taken to tackle the Commonwealth’s opioid crisis

By Eric P. Lesser

One of the most urgent problems facing our community is substance abuse, and in particular, opioid addiction. Massachusetts recorded nearly 1,100 opioid-related overdose deaths in 2014, a 63 percent increase over 2012. Opioid deaths now kill more people in Massachusetts than car accidents and guns combined.

Across our Commonwealth, public safety officials and community leaders are working hard to fight back, whether through school outreach programs, expanded treatment options, specialized first responder training or drug-trafficking investigations and arrests. But addiction and overdose still remain a large problem, especially in my home of Hampden County, where the rate of individuals with prescription drug abuse has exceeded the state average since 2011.

Given the escalating nature of this crisis, I wanted to share some of the work I’ve been doing at the State House to help reverse its direction.

First, I worked with fellow legislators, local officials and community leaders to secure approval for a new drug court in Springfield, to be opened this year. This new specialty court will give our judges and law enforcement officers an important tool to provide the best possible treatment options to those struggling with substance abuse and addiction.

Notably, drug courts help save money by keeping more of our citizens out of prisons and reducing the chance that they will be arrested in the future, producing cost savings of $3,000 to $13,000 per person. Until this year, Greenfield was the only Western Massachusetts community with access to this specialized court.

Second, I authored a bill that became the basis of a new law enabling the bulk-purchase of Narcan, a lifesaving anti-overdose drug. Narcan is highly effective, with a 95 percent success rate, and plays a vital role in preventing opioid deaths. The price of this drug has skyrocketed in recent years, how- ever, making it more affordable and accessible.

Second, I authored a bill that became the basis of a new law enabling the bulk-purchase of Narcan, a lifesaving anti-overdose drug. Narcan is highly effective, with a 95 percent success rate, and plays a vital role in preventing opioid deaths. The price of this drug has skyrocketed in recent years, however, forcing many cities and towns to consider reducing supplies or digging deeper into already limited resources.

The Salonee Municipal Bulk Pur-
chase Program, just launched in December, allows any city, town or state agency to purchase Narcan at a deeply discounted rate, as low as $20 per dose. This discount is made possible by a $525,000 trust fund deposit that, along with $100,000 in funding from the Legislature, makes 20,000 doses of Narcan available for dis- counted public use.

I also authored a provision, signed by Sen. Eric Lesser, Gov. Charlie Baker in July 2015, closing the pharmacy shopping loophole for highly addictive narcotics. This measure reduces the length of time pharmacies must report to the state’s Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP) from the current 7 days to 24 hours. This simple but important change, recommended by the Depart- ment of Public Health, allows the Com- monwealth to be more nimble in preventing pharmacy shopping.

Lastly, I’m working with Gov. Baker, Senate President Stanley Rosenberg and communities across my district to reduce the destructive stigma that still exists around substance abuse, especially heroin addiction. Just a few weeks ago, for example, I hosted a roundtable of Western Massachusetts police chiefs to discuss ways we can collaborate to reduce substance abuse in our communi- ties. I also visited the Hampden County Corrections Center, where Sheriff Michael Ashe, Jr. is doing na- tionally recognized work to reduce recidivism and help former inmates transition successfully back into society. Through all these efforts, we’re making progress in voicing the truth—that opioid addiction is a disease that needs treatment, rather than incarcer- ation.

While substance abuse is a serious challenge, by working together we can help prevent tragic deaths, make our neighborhoods safer and put more res- idents on the road to recovery.

Sen. Eric P. Lesser (D-Longmeadow) represents the First Hampden and Hampshire District. He is a member of the Special Senate Committee on Opioid Addiction Prevention, Treatment and Re-covery Options.
continue from Page 1

BUDGET: Gov. makes first move

training and employment assistance programs, H2 reduces the Employment Services Programs line item, which includes funding for Competitive Integrated Employment Services (CIES), by about $600,000. The Council will be advocating that the House and Senate fund CIES at no less than $2 million – the same language present in the FY '16 budget.

Overall, however, providers were pleased with the budget. An additional $30 million was added to the Department of Children and Families to add 281 staff, 236 of which will be social workers, Sudders said.

Funding for Respite and Family support under the Department of Developmental Services was also increased by about 10 percent, to $62.7 million; sub-

FORCE: Race to 20K was won

Continued from Page 1

very important time for human services,” said Caring Force Committee Chair Michael Moloney, president and CEO of HMEA, Inc. “We’re starting this year with a lot of momentum and some key issues in front of us, including legislation to ad-vance student loan repayment and expand the Providers’ Council’s tuition remission program.”

The Caring Force sponsored the Race to 20K throughout the month of December, seeking to reach the 20,000-member milestone by Jan. 1. TCF closed out 2015 with 20,168 members, including Zihairwa, who won a pizza party for himself and 10 co-workers by being the lucky 20,000th person to sign up.

“I consider my job a gift,” he said. “Every day I wake up and say: Another lucky 20,000th person to sign up. That means that while winning the unofficial race for the next milestone be-

ADVOCACY: IRS backs down

Continued from Page 1

stores, and third-party payers. The IRS’ new policy would remedy this.”

Weekes testified about the benefits of H.891, notably that it would benefit the Commonwealth and taxpayers by lowering the health insurance reim-bursement costs the state must pay to providers. In addition:

• Employees would receive a high-quality health insurance product with much more variety in available plans and more rate stability. 
• Employers would increase affordability for their dedicated staff while being able to plan for smaller percent-age increases from year-to-year. 
• Residents of Massachusetts would benefit from having a more stable work-force and reduced turnover, and they learned to value what I am and what people are.

In addition to working with Bay Cove consumers and clients, Zihairwa is also a student in the Providers’ Council’s year-long, graduate-level Certificate in Nonprofit Human Services Management at Suffolk University.

“Helping human service profession-al and managers get the best tools needed is important,” he said. “Education will be very helpful in this process.”

And the Caring Force will help educate lawmakers about the bills that can advance educational opportunities for the human service workforce and other legislation aimed at helping provider or-ganizations.

That means that while winning the Race to 20K is an incredible achieve-

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support: Testifying on GIC

In a recent survey of Providers’ Council members, one-third of the re-

spondents said that their health insur-

ance premium rates increased by more than 10 percent in the last year and half

of all respondents said their health in-

surance costs are more than $1 million annually. For nearly all members, it is the

second largest expense after salaries.

“Salary increases have never been able to keep pace with insurance in-

creases,” said Jim Laprade, the senior vice president of operations at Bay Cove Human Services. “The amount of dol-

lars drained from service dollars is sig-

nificant, but this shift (to the GIC) would remedy this.”

Weekes testified about the benefits of H.891, notably that it would benefit the Commonwealth and taxpayers by lowering the health insurance reimbursement costs the state must pay to providers. In addition:

• Employees would receive a high-quality health insurance product with much more variety in available plans and more rate stability. 
• Employers would increase affordability for their dedicated staff while being able to plan for smaller percentage increases from year-to-year. 
• Residents of Massachusetts would benefit from having a more stable workforce and reduced turnover, and they benefit without paying higher taxes; the bill has no anticipated adverse financial impact on the Commonwealth.

Patrick Smith, an employee of Bay Cove Human Services, told the commit-

tee that after health insurance, rent and other monthly expenses, there is no money left. He left a higher paying job to work in human services because he loves and values the work, but he also has a part-time job as he pursues an advanced degree.

“I’m healthy, but I’m crossing my fingers,” Smith said to the committee: 

“If I had an ongoing health issue, the co-pay for treatment would be too high.”

Noting that the committee often hears from corporations, business owners and insurance companies, Sen. James Eldridge thanked Coolidge, Lopez-Haddad, Laprade, Smith and Weekes for speaking.

“It’s so crucial to hear from nonprof-

its, especially human services nonprof-

its who provide critical services to those who are the most vulnerable,” said Eld-

ridge, a chairman of the Joint Com-

mittee of Financial Services.

According to the state website, nearly 240,000 people are currently en-

rolled in the GIC and approximately 435,000 have coverage through it.

For information about the GIC bill or the rest of the Council’s legislative agenda, please contact Bill Yelenak at bill@providers.org or 617.428.3637 x122.

37,977 comments during the rule-

making period.
CALENDAR OF EVENTS • WINTER/Spring 2016

What: Got Conflict? Deal with Conflict Effectively – Tools for your Toolbox
Date: Thursday, Feb. 4
Where: Walker, 1968 Central Ave., Needham
When: 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
Trainer: Gail Packer, Community Dispute Settlement Center, Inc.
Cost: $65 members; $95 non-members

What: Succession Planning Forum
Date: Wednesday, February 24
Where: Eliot Community Human Services Training Center, 565 Salem End Road, Framingham
When: 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.
Panelists: Joanne Hilferty, President/CEO Morgan Memorial Goodwill Industries of Massachusetts; Imari Paris Jeffries, CEO of The Italian Home for Children; Hez Norton, Director of Partnership & Leadership Initiatives for Third Sector New England; Bill Sprague, President/CEO of Bay Cove Human Services.
Cost: $35 members; $60 non-members

What: NASW Workplace Safety Training
Date: Thursday, Feb. 25
Where: WORK Inc., 25 Beach St., Dorchester
When: 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
Trainer: April Fletcher, MSW, LICSW
Cost: $65 members; $95 non-members

What: Domestic Violence – It’s Everyone’s Business
Date: Tuesday, March 15
Where: American Training, 6 Campanelli Drive, Andover
When: 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
Trainer: Courtney Cahill, Employers Against Domestic Violence
Cost: $65 members; $95 non-members

What: Conducting Effective Internal Investigations– New Extended Session!
Date: Tuesday, April 5
Where: Justice Resource Institute, 1671 Worcester Road Suite 100, Framingham
When: 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Trainer: Jean Haertl, Safety & Respect at Work, LLC
Cost: $99 members, $135 non-members

What: Spring Certificate in Supervision Series – Somerville
Dates: Thursdays, April 7 & 21; May 5 & 19; June 2 & 16
Where: Vinfen, 61 Inner Belt Road, Somerville
When: 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
Trainers: Debora Bloom of Debora Bloom Associates and Wally Coyle of E. Wallace Coyle Associates
Cost: $450 members; $700 non-members

What: 5th Annual Caring Force State House Rally for Human Services
Date: Tuesday, April 12
When: 10 a.m.
Register: Online registration will open soon at providers.org

Pre-registration for these events is required unless otherwise noted. Online registration is available for most events. No login or password is required. Visit www.providers.org and look on the page’s left-hand side for the event you wish to attend. Questions? Call 617-428-3637 or email the Council at adminassistant@providers.org.