

A FOCUS ON HEALTH CARE: FIVE KEY PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT ADMINISTRATION

DECEMBER 2022

In early 2022, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation solicited perspectives from 29 diverse health care stakeholders on the most pressing health care issues facing the new governor and slate of legislative leaders in Massachusetts. Five priorities emerged from these interviews, requiring immediate action:



1. ADDRESS SYSTEMIC RACISM AND INEQUITIES IN HEALTH

- Establish an administration leadership structure that is accountable for a “whole of government” and community-informed approach to health equity
- Establish a four-year plan for reducing inequities in health care coverage, access, quality, consumer experience, and outcomes
- Empower and fund the communities most impacted by inequities to advance health equity at the community level



2. ENSURE CONSUMER HEALTH CARE AFFORDABILITY

- Expand affordable coverage offerings through the Health Connector
- Expand the authority and charge of the Health Policy Commission to more directly address consumer affordability



3. CONFRONT THE MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

- Establish a cross-sector cabinet of leaders charged with planning to improve the mental health of Massachusetts children and youth
- Conduct a comprehensive assessment of the mental health care continuum for children and youth, and develop initiatives to address gaps
- Craft a 10-year strategy across all sectors serving Massachusetts’ children to improve the health and well-being of children and youth
- Establish a way of allocating federal and state funding across multiple sectors to support the strategy



4. IMPROVE ACCESS TO LONG-TERM SERVICES AND SUPPORTS, INCLUDING LONG-TERM CARE

- Task a senior executive branch leader to solve long-standing challenges around long-term care planning, affordability, and financing
- Advance a state discussion about coordinating and integrating long-term services and supports (LTSS) with other covered services in MassHealth



5. MITIGATE CRITICAL HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE SHORTAGES

- Develop and implement a 10-year health care workforce plan that prioritizes the LTSS and behavioral health workforce
- Immediately implement initiatives to support paraprofessional LTSS and behavioral health workers, with the goal of incrementally increasing wages to a living wage