



## **The Human Service Workforce Provides Critical Services to One-in-Ten Massachusetts Residents**

- Throughout COVID-19, our membership of over 180,000 human service workers provided in-person and telehealth care throughout the Commonwealth.
- This included mental health and addiction treatment services, care for individuals with developmental and/or intellectual disabilities, help for children and youth in need of support, protection of women and children, assistance to the elderly, operation of shelters for individuals experiencing homelessness, aid to our veterans and much more.

## **An Ongoing Workforce Crisis is Threatening our Human Service System**

- Historically low rates of pay and the difficulty in filling jobs that serve complex populations has resulted in high vacancy rates, frequent turnover, long waitlists and the permanent closure of certain programs. COVID-19 only exacerbated these existing issues.
- Our workforce has benchmark salaries set by EOHHS, preventing providers from raising the pay for their staff without risking significant losses.
  - For rates effective July 1, 2021, EOHHS proposed that direct care workers be paid \$16.79/hour.
- As of 2018, median human services wages were \$27,376, 48% lower than the median Massachusetts worker.

### ***The Collaborative's Proposal for ARPA Funding to Improve Workforce Recruitment and Retention:***

- \$174 million per year for five years to the human service workforce for enhanced pay and recruitment initiatives.
  - This allocation represents \$5,000 per full-time human service worker. Funds may be used to provide supplemental payments to employed workers and/or to create hiring incentives.
  - This infusion would represent a foundation upon which to build a sustainable increase in rates through the state's rate-setting process, in order to stabilize the sector in the long-term.
- \$27 million over five years for the creation of a student loan repayment program designed to help ensure an educated and well-trained workforce.
  - Loan repayment programs should be expanded beyond physicians, psychiatrists and other high-paying jobs, and be available to those working full-time and making under \$50,000.
  - This program could assist over 3,000 workers per year in repaying qualified student loans.
- \$250,000 for a marketing campaign designed to attract unemployed and underemployed Massachusetts residents to careers in the human services sector.

***The Collaborative*** consists of four human service membership associations: Association of Developmental Disabilities Providers (ADDP), the Association for Behavioral Healthcare (ABH), the Children's League of Massachusetts and the Providers' Council.