



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Executive Office of Health and Human Services  
Department of Public Health  
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CHARLES D. BAKER  
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MONICA BHAREL, MD, MPH  
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January 6, 2020

House Clerk  
State House Room 145  
Boston, MA 02133

Senate Clerk  
State House Room 335  
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Mr. Clerk,

Pursuant to line item 4513-1020 of Section 2 of Chapter 47 of the Acts of 2017, please find enclosed a report from the Department of Public Health entitled **Early Intervention FY19 Expenditures and Respite Referrals Approved by Month**.

Sincerely,

Monica Bharel, MD, MPH  
Commissioner  
Department of Public Health

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**Charles D. Baker**  
Governor

**Karyn Polito**  
Lieutenant Governor



**Marylou Sudders**  
Secretary

**Monica Bharel, MD, MPH**  
Commissioner

## **Early Intervention**

# **FY19 Respite Expenditures and Referrals Approved by Month**

## **January 2020**



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## Legislative Mandate

Pursuant to line item 4513-1020 of Section 2 of Chapter 154 of the Acts of 2018:

*For the early intervention program; provided, that the department shall report quarterly to the house and senate committees on ways and means on the total number of units of service purchased and the total expenditures for the units of service paid by the department, the executive office of health and human services and third party payers for early intervention services for the following service categories: home visit, center-based individual, child-focused group, parent-focused group and screening and assessment; provided further, that the department shall make all reasonable efforts to secure third party and Medicaid reimbursements for the services funded in this item; provided further, **that funds from this item shall be expended to provide respite services to families of children enrolled in early intervention programs who have complex care requirements, multiple disabilities and extensive medical and health needs; provided further, that priority shall be given to low- and moderate-income families; provided further, that the department shall submit to the house and senate committees on ways and means a report on the number of families served by the program and the amount of funds appropriated in this item granted to qualified families;** provided further, that no claim for reimbursement made on behalf of an uninsured person shall be paid from this item until the program receives notice of a denial of eligibility for the MassHealth program from the executive office of health and human services; provided further, that MassHealth shall cover the costs incurred for the transportation of MassHealth members who participate in the early intervention program; provided further, that nothing in this item shall give rise to, or shall be construed as giving rise to, enforceable legal rights to any such services or an enforceable entitlement to the early intervention services funded in this item; provided further, that the department shall provide written notification to the house and senate committees on ways and means 90 days before any change to its current eligibility criteria; provided further, that no eligibility changes shall be made before January 1, 2019; provided further, that these funds may be used to pay for current and prior year claims; provided further, that the department shall provide services to eligible children through 1 service delivery model and shall not determine eligibility for services based on family insurance status; provided further, that not later than March 1, 2019, the department shall submit to the executive office for administration and finance and to the house and senate committees on ways and means a status update on the early intervention state assigned student identifier pilot program; and provided further, that the update shall include a cost estimate for expanding the pilot to additional sites in fiscal year 2019.*

## Summary

The Department of Public Health contracts with six Regional Consultation Programs (RCPs), located across the Commonwealth, to provide consultation to eligible families and to programs in their communities. In order to address the needs of children who have complex care requirements, multiple disabilities, and/or extensive medical/health needs, RCPs expand the skills and expertise of service providers. The RCPs provide access to a range of consultative expertise in areas such as special medical needs, feeding, positioning, adaptive equipment, and assistive technology.

In addition, the RCPs provide oversight for Family Support and Respite Services for the families of some Early Intervention participants. Under this program, families of Early Intervention children may request respite services if their children have complex care requirements, multiple disabilities, and/or extensive medical/health needs (same criteria as above). Eligible families may receive funding for the provision of respite services. The family may select a trained professional or a family member/friend. The family is responsible for ensuring that the individual they select has the appropriate experience to care for their child. Upon request, the RCPs may help facilitate the process for selecting a provider and are responsible for reimbursing respite providers.

In Fiscal Year 2019, **925** children and their families have received Family Support and Respite Services. The Department expended **\$303,140.00** by the close of the fiscal year.

**DPH Early Intervention Respite Referrals Approved by Month, FY19:**

The following represents the number of families approved for respite/family support funding by month.

July 2018 - 97

August 2018 - 107

September 2018 - 105

October 2018 - 68

November 2018 - 57

December 2018 - 66

January 2019 - 38

February 2019 - 58

March 2019 - 86

April 2019 - 55

May 2019 - 81

June 2019 – 107

**Total # of families = 925**

**Total amount Family Support approximately \$50,000 per region (6) - total spent = \$303,140**

Each family received approximately \$328.00

## **Conclusion**

The funding for respite services contained within account number 4513-1020 provides valuable and needed support for families of very young children complex medical needs enrolled in the Commonwealth Early Intervention program. A total of **925** families received respite service for children enrolled in Early Intervention in FY19 to have opportunities for time away from the emotional and physical burden of raising a child with complex medical needs.