Gov.’s proposal includes $160m for Chapter 257 Reserve

Governor Baker’s budget proposal released Wednesday includes a record $160 million for the Chapter 257 and Human Services Reserve (1599-6903) and the administration noted it intends to change the way salaries are set for human services workers who fill nearly 180,000 jobs in Massachusetts.

In a briefing with stakeholders Thursday morning, EOHHS Secretary Marylou Sudders noted that the $160 million in funding was based on EOHHS using salary benchmark information from the Bureau of Labor Statistics to set human services workers’ salaries, rather than relying on historically depressed Uniform Financial Reports submitted by community-based human services organizations.

“The Collaborative is incredibly appreciative to Governor Baker, Secretary Sudders and Assistant Secretary Alda Rego for their partnership and their commitment to ensure community-based human services workers receive better wages based on market driven data,” said Michael Weekes, President/CEO of the Providers’ Council. “After working directly with EOHHS officials for nearly a year on a plan to increase wages for low-paid workers, nurses and clinicians, we’re pleased to see this significant progress that will help close the gap between fair market wages and what staff are currently making.”

The Collaborative is a group of human services trade associations that have worked together for more than a decade on rate-setting issues. The Association for Behavioral Healthcare, the Association of Developmental Disabilities Providers, the Children’s League of Massachusetts and the Providers’ Council comprise The Collaborative.

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