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chapter six

Other state programs

Are there any other programs in Massachusetts that might help my child and how do I find them?

Certain mental health care services are available from Massachusetts state agencies. If your child has complicated mental health needs, he or she may need services that go beyond what a school or health insurance provider can offer. However, the process of getting services from a state agency can be a challenge.

In this chapter, you will be introduced to the key state agencies that provide mental health services for children, including: the Department of Mental Health, the Department of Public Health, the Department of Mental Retardation, the Department of Social Services, and the Juvenile Justice System.

In each case, you will find information about your child's eligibility and the process of getting services, as well as information about the types of services available and how to pay for them. Many services from state agencies are provided free of charge. The downside of this is that you may encounter a long waiting list for services.

It is important to be an active advocate when seeking these services for your child—and even when the process is frustrating, you will find that the people working in these agencies really want to help. For additional assistance with advocacy, see the list of resources and organizations at the back of the Guide.

To request a copy of the How-To Guide,
contact TheGuide@bostonbar.org or 617-778-1934—or explore it online at www.bostonbar.org/theguide.