

# Alliance for Community Health Integration



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 7, 2018

Contact: Maddie Ribble, 617-697-2107 or Enid Eckstein, 617-694-0304

## Public Health, Community Advocates Praise Attorney General For Updated Hospital Investment Guidelines

*Reforms Expected To Lead To Greater Impact On Community Health And Improved Community Engagement*

Today, leaders from the Alliance for Community Health Integration (ACHI) praised the release of updated guidelines on hospital community benefits from Attorney General Maura Healey. ACHI, a coalition of public health, consumer advocacy, and social service leaders, expressed support for changes that will increase the impact of hospital community benefit investments on the communities they serve.

“We thank Attorney General Healey for leading an inclusive process to develop these updated guidelines,” said **Maddie Ribble, Director of Public Policy for the Massachusetts Public Health Association**. “The final product is more than just a set of guidelines; it represents a powerful vision for how hospitals can help address the social and economic factors that lead to poor health in our communities. It has been a true pleasure to collaborate with the Attorney General and our hospital colleagues to help advance our shared goals.”

1. Focus on Social Determinants of Health. Attorney General Healey’s updated guidelines put a greater priority on community conditions such as access to housing, transportation, and healthy food – conditions referred to in the guidelines as “social determinants of health.” In doing so, the guidelines provide greater alignment with related requirements of the Department of Public Health (DPH) that govern the allocation of hospital resources. This alignment will help direct more resources to where they will have the greatest impact on fundamental community needs and create synergy with other investments required by DPH.

“We are extremely pleased to see the Attorney General’s alignment of priorities with DPH’s social determinants of health. This shift will encourage hospitals to make impactful investments, in areas such as affordable housing, that improve the health outcomes of our most underserved residents,” said **Joe Kriesberg, President of the Massachusetts Association of Community Development Corporations**.

2. Increased Community Engagement. The guidelines recommend the highest level of community engagement at each step of the community benefits process. The guidelines promote greater collaboration with stakeholders such as community residents, grassroots organizations, and local public health departments – across the full spectrum of assessment, program planning, implementation, and

---

*The Alliance for Community Health Integration (ACHI) is a coalition of public health, consumer advocacy, social service, and community organizations working to harness health care to address social determinants of health and promote health equity.*

# Alliance for Community Health Integration

---

evaluation. Doing so will ensure that investments meet the needs of the community and have the greatest possible impact. Under the new guidelines, community residents will have also increased opportunities to formally report and comment directly to the Attorney General's office.

"The new guidelines provide a set of advocacy tools for community organizations. The guidelines create a framework for enhanced community engagement at all stages of the process. Community organizations, with these guidelines, can more effectively advocate to programs to meet the needs of their communities and address the social determinants of health," said **Enid Eckstein, Member of the Massachusetts Public Health Association and community activist.**

3. Promotion of Regional Collaboration. The guidelines place additional emphasis on regional cooperation among hospitals and local health departments whose target communities overlap in areas such as developing common needs assessments and implementation efforts across multiple hospitals. Increased regional collaboration will help to reduce duplication and provide for more effective and coordinated efforts.

"We've seen incredibly transformative investments through hospital collaborations in other states in areas such as housing, healthy food access, and workforce development. Replicating that kind of pooled investment and regional collaboration here could have a tremendous impact on the health of Massachusetts communities," said **Anna Leslie, Chair of the Boston Alliance for Community Health.**

4. Transparent Action Plans. The guidelines promote greater information sharing and transparency from hospitals about community benefits. The guidelines recommend that hospitals provide a variety of important information to the public about how investments are made in their communities, including: their community needs assessments, the health needs addressed by their community benefits investments, a community benefits implementation strategy, and community benefits expenditures broken down by program type (ranging from direct clinical services to community-wide interventions).

"These guidelines take the essential step of focusing hospitals on the critical need to develop and implement a community responsive plan, or as it is often called, Implementation Strategy, which very clearly and transparently communicates what the aim and activities are for a hospital's community benefit efforts," said **Paul Hattis of the Greater Boston Interfaith Organization.**

ACHI leaders expressed their hope that the guidelines would support continued innovation in hospital community benefits. "We hope that hospitals use these guidelines as a launching pad to establish stronger and more authentic engagement with community residents, to experiment with new kinds of pooled investments and statewide approaches to common health challenges, and to commit to the highest levels of communication and transparency with their communities," said **Enid Eckstein, Member of the Massachusetts Public Health Association and community activist.** "In doing so, hospitals can be powerful players in supporting healthy and equitable communities."

###

# Alliance for Community Health Integration

---

## About the Alliance for Community Health Integration

The Alliance for Community Health Integration (ACHI) is a coalition of more than 20 public health, consumer advocacy, social service, and community organizations working to harness health care to address social determinants of health and promote health equity. Through advocacy, organizing, and capacity building, ACHI seeks to build a stronger, more unified voice for communities and consumers to advance racial and economic justice through reforms in health care. Launched in 2017, ACHI's current priorities focus on maximizing the impact of the new MassHealth accountable care organizations (ACOs), better aligning hospital investments with community needs, and collaborating with health care institutions to advance affordable housing policy.

Five ACHI member organizations served on the Attorney General's Advisory Task Force on Community Benefits, which met from April to November of 2017: Boston Public Health Commission, Greater Boston Interfaith Organization, Massachusetts Association of Community Development Corporations, Massachusetts Communities Action Network, and Massachusetts Public Health Association. Numerous other ACHI members and supporters participated in a series of four listening sessions held by the Attorney General's office to share their perspective and recommendations. The Task Force also included the Department of Public Health, researchers, leaders from philanthropy, consumer advocates, and representatives from hospitals, insurers, and community health centers.

## Members of ACHI include:

Action for Boston Community Development  
AIDS Action Committee  
Alliance of Massachusetts YMCAs  
Boston Alliance for Community Health  
Boston Public Health Commission  
Center for Community Health Education Research and Service  
Children's HealthWatch  
Citizens Housing and Planning Association  
Disability Policy Consortium  
Greater Boston Interfaith Organization  
Health Care For All

Health Care Without Harm  
Health Resources in Action  
Massachusetts Association of Community Development Corporations  
Massachusetts Association of Community Health Workers  
Massachusetts Communities Action Network  
Massachusetts Law Reform Institute  
Massachusetts Public Health Association  
National Association of Social Workers – MA Chapter  
MLPB  
Public Health Institute of Western Massachusetts