

FY2020 HOUSE BUDGET AMENDMENT PRIORITIES

April 16, 2019

Dear Representative:

We ask for your support for these amendments to adequately fund programs that support healthy communities and promote health equity for all Massachusetts residents in the FY20 budget.

TOP PRIORITIES

- **Amendment #483 - State Action for Public Health Excellence (SAPHE) Program, by Rep. Kane.** *Fund at \$1.7m within 4510-0100 (new).* This amendment will allocate new funding to increase training opportunities for the municipal public health workforce and will create an incentive grant program to increase shared services across municipalities. Funding will advance the recommendations of the Special Commission on Local & Regional Public Health to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the local public health system. Our current system faces significant structural and financial challenges, making it difficult for municipalities to meet responsibilities to safeguard our food, water, and air quality; ensure safe and healthy housing conditions; and control communicable diseases; among others. *History – new.*
- **Amendments #821, #823 & #825 - Regional Transit Authorities (RTAs) Funding & Performance, by Rep. Peake.** *Fund 1595-6370 at \$90.5m in base funding (increase over FY19).* These amendments will increase base funding, tie future funding to inflation, and require bilateral MOUs between MassDOT and each RTA to address performance targets on ridership, rider satisfaction, asset management and financial performance (consistent with the recommendations of the Task Force on RTA Performance and Funding established in the FY19 budget). RTAs, serving 262 communities outside of Greater Boston, connect residents, especially low-income residents and seniors, to medical care, substance use treatment, groceries, jobs, education and other drivers of good health outcomes. Additional funding is needed to improve and expand service. *History – FY20 HWM: \$82m in base funding + \$4m in discretionary funds, FY20 H1: \$82m in base funding + 4m in discretionary funds, FY19: \$82m in base funding + \$6m in discretionary funds, FY16: \$82m in base funding.*

ADDITIONAL PRIORITIES

- **Amendment #476 - Healthy Incentives Program, by Reps. Kane and Donahue.** *Fund 4400-1004 at \$8.5m (increase over FY19).* This amendment will meet increasing program demand by allowing it to operate year-round, allow for more participants, and fill geographic gaps in the program. HIP increases healthy food access by providing a one-for-one match, adding money back onto a SNAP recipient's EBT card when they use it to purchase fresh fruits or vegetables at a participating farm stand, farmers market, CSA, or mobile market. SNAP sales at farm retailers increased by 600% - to \$8.3m - from 2016-2017 thanks to HIP. *History – FY20 HWM: \$4m, FY20 H1: \$5.3m, FY19: \$6.35m, FY18: \$1.35m.*
- **Amendment #691 - Closing the SNAP Gap, by Rep. Livingstone.** *Updated language in 4000-0300 (modified from FY19).* This amendment directs EOHHS to establish a pilot to allow residents to apply for SNAP (food assistance) automatically when applying for or renewing MassHealth or Medicare Savings Program benefits. The amendment would also task the Administration with identifying the costs of implementing this initiative. The "SNAP Gap" refers to the 740K+ people who are enrolled in

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MassHealth and likely eligible for SNAP, but who aren't receiving benefits. *History – FY20 HWM: not included; FY20 H1: not included, FY19: related language included.*

- **Amendments #652 & #859 - Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (MRVP), by Reps. Donato and McGonagle.** *Fund 7004-9024 at \$130m (increase over FY19).* These amendments will provide additional funding to increase the stock of affordable housing and produce new vouchers; as well as to update fair market rent standards that have been frozen since 2005, increasing the accessibility of vouchers in Massachusetts' high-cost rental markets. The number of households experiencing housing instability and homelessness persists as MA remains one of the most expensive states in the nation. Access to housing vouchers has been shown to increase stability and improve health outcomes for adults and kids. *History – FY20 HWM: \$110m, FY20 H1: \$100m, FY19: \$100m, FY18: \$92.7m.*

We thank you for your partnership to support a healthy and equitable Commonwealth. For more information, please contact Maddie Ribble at 617-697-2107 or mribble@mapublichealth.org.

Sincerely,



Carlene Pavlos
Executive Director



Maddie Ribble
Director of Public Policy