

NEWS RELEASE

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160+ CIVIC AND COMMUNITY LEADERS CALLS FOR ACTION ON PREVENTION & WELLNESS TRUST FUND

Today, more than 160 organizations and civic leaders – including 20 mayors and town managers – sent a letter to legislative leaders urging them to include funding for the Prevention & Wellness Trust Fund in any health care legislation that advances this session.

Between 2014-2018, PWTF funded successful clinical-community partnerships focused on childhood asthma, falls among older adults, hypertension, and tobacco use. An independent evaluation concluded that “PWTF appears to be a very sound investment from the point of view of improving outcomes and controlling costs.”

While both the House and Senate included support for PWTF in their respective health care bills last session, the measure died when the conference committee could not agree on a final bill.

The letter notes that:

“Preventable health conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, asthma, and substance use disorders continue to rise, consuming 86% of national health care costs. The result is shorter lives, lower quality of life, reduced workplace productivity, and more missed school days. Preventable chronic conditions affect all areas of the state, but disproportionately impact communities of color and low income communities, representing a fundamental barrier to equity in our Commonwealth. Tackling these challenges requires more than just good clinical care – it depends on a robust investment in community-based prevention such as the Prevention & Wellness Trust Fund.”

A bipartisan majority of both the House and Senate are co-sponsoring legislation by Rep. Vega and Sen. Lewis (H2012/S1293) to reauthorize and fund PWTF. The bill is currently pending before the Joint Committee on Health Care Financing.

Select signers of the letter include:

- **Municipal leaders:** Boston Mayor Marty Walsh, Quincy Mayor Tom Koch, Weymouth Mayor Robert Hedlund, Framingham Mayor Yvonne Spicer, New Bedford Mayor Jon Mitchell, Pittsfield Mayor Linda Tyer, Holyoke Mayor Alex Morse, Lynn Mayor Tom McGee Kennedy, and North Adams Mayor Richard Alcombright, among others.
- **Health policy leaders:** Massachusetts Public Health Association, Health Care For All, Alliance of Massachusetts YMCAs, Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers, Massachusetts

Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, Massachusetts Medical Society, Massachusetts Association of Community Health Workers, Massachusetts Health Council, Greater Boston Interfaith Organization (GBIO), American Heart/Stroke Association, American Diabetes Association, American Lung Association, the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, and the Public Health Institute of Western Massachusetts, among others.

- **Community and policy leaders:** The Boston Foundation, Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless, Massachusetts Food System Collaborative, Massachusetts Councils on Aging, Massachusetts Association of Community Development Corporations, Citizens Housing and Planning Association, Franklin Regional Council of Governments, Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, Metropolitan Area Planning Council, among others.
- **Local social service and health providers:** Greater Fall River Partners for a Healthier Community, Immigrants' Assistance Center of New Bedford, Montachusett Opportunity Council, Quincy Asian Resources, South Shore Health, Bay State Community Services, Revere CARES, MetroWest YMCA, Holyoke Medical Center, Boston Medical Center Health System, Community Health Network for North Central Massachusetts, Action for Boston Community Development, Beth Israel Deaconess-Milton, UMass Memorial Healthcare, South Shore Elder Services, the Latino Health Insurance Program, YMCA Cape Cod, Greater New Bedford Community Health Center, Edward M. Kennedy Health Center, Ethos, and Greater Lynn Senior Services, among others.

Supportive Quotes

- "If we want to ensure equitable health outcomes for all residents, we must invest in prevention at the community level," said **Representative Aaron Vega (Holyoke)**, lead House sponsor of PWTF legislation. "The Prevention & Wellness Trust is central to our ability to do so in Massachusetts."
- "Over five years, PWTF made incredible strides in breaking down barriers between clinical and community services," said **Senator Jason Lewis (Winchester)**, lead Senate sponsor of PWTF legislation. "By recognizing and addressing the social and community factors that impact health, PWTF recognizes that Massachusetts residents are people first and patients second."
- "I am proud that Massachusetts was the first state in the Nation to establish such a comprehensive program to invest in evidence-based community interventions," said **Senator Harriette L. Chandler (Worcester)**, an original sponsor of the 2011 legislation that led to the creation of the PWTF. "It is our responsibility to ensure that prevention remains a central tenet of our health reform efforts. We must keep this important work going."
- "All residents of Massachusetts should have opportunities for good health no matter what their background or zip code," said **Maddie Ribble, Director of Public Policy for the Massachusetts Public Health Association**. "In 2018, the House and Senate both took action to sustain PWTF. Now, it's time to get PWTF across the finish line and secure the future of this successful and effective initiative."
- "The Prevention and Wellness Trust Fund is innovative, important, and perhaps most importantly life changing for the patients who have been able to take advantage of it," said **Peter Doliber, Executive Director of the Alliance of Massachusetts YMCAs**. "The fund allowed nine communities to work together around preventive health. This is something that our other work in Massachusetts health care has not allowed. Typically, in the health care arena we tackle problems with smaller grants and funds. We also tend to tackle the problems after they happen, not before. This fund infused a large sum of money into preventive health,

something that is rarely seen but all research continues to support as being necessary. The YMCAs support reestablishment of this fund and hope that this important work can continue."

- "The PWTF has been a tremendous success in supporting community health centers in their mission to provide high quality, person-centered care," said **Michael Curry, Senior Vice President of the Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers**. "PWTF is unique in that it recognizes all the factors that influence a person's health, not just those that can be addressed in the health center, and convenes the right community partners to improve the health of our patients."

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