

Open Letter to Massachusetts Legislative Leaders  
**Prevention & Wellness Trust Fund Key to Addressing Poor Health,  
Supporting Successful Health System Transformation**

Original letter date: September 17, 2019

Updated with additional signers: October 7, 2019

Senator Cindy Friedman, Chair  
Representative Jennifer Benson, Chair  
Joint Committee on Health Care Financing  
State House  
Boston, MA 02133

**Re: Please Include the Prevention & Wellness Trust Fund in Health Care Legislation**

Dear Chair Friedman and Chair Benson:

Since the passage of the last major health reform legislation in Massachusetts in 2012 (Chapter 224), the Commonwealth has staked out new and aggressive strategies to improve health outcomes, address health care costs, and combat alarming health inequities across race, ethnicity, and income. The Prevention & Wellness Trust Fund (PWTF), established in Chapter 224, has been a key part of our state's multi-pronged approach, investing in evidence-based community interventions that help to keep residents healthy and safe. PWTF – the first program of its kind in the country – has been recognized as a national model by other states, national health care and public health organizations, and the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention.

**We ask that re-authorization for PWTF be included in any health care legislative package that advances in the House and Senate this session.**

Between 2014-2018, PWTF funded successful clinical-community partnerships focused on childhood asthma, falls among older adults, hypertension, and tobacco use. We are pleased with the results of the rigorous independent evaluation of PWTF conducted by Harvard Catalyst, which concluded that **“PWTF appears to be a very sound investment from the point of view of improving outcomes and controlling costs.”** The evaluation found that:

- PWTF hypertension interventions generated net cost-savings
- PWTF pediatric asthma interventions led to declines in total health care costs
- PWTF falls prevention interventions were cost effective and projected to prevent 3,000 falls among older adults over five years

The independent evaluation noted significant systems innovation and concluded that PWTF warrants further investment.

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.**

PWTF can bring evidence-based interventions to scale and evaluate their impact, providing crucial lessons for MassHealth and accountable care organizations as they seek to improve care at lower cost. PWTF also addresses community factors that lead to poor health – supporting ACOs to take on financial risk by tackling major cost drivers.

We are very pleased that both the House and Senate included support for PWTF in their respective health care bills last session, and we are heartened that a bipartisan majority of both the House and Senate has co-sponsored PWTF legislation this session.

We ask for your partnership to continue the important and groundbreaking work of the Prevention & Wellness Trust Fund.

Signed,

*(see signatories on following pages)*

cc: Chair Jo Comerford, Senate Chair, Joint Committee on Public Health  
Chair John Mahoney, House Chair, Joint Committee on Public Health

Members, Joint Committee on Health Care Financing:

Senator Harriette L. Chandler, Vice Chair  
Representative Daniel R. Cullinane, Vice Chair  
Senator Viriato M. deMacedo, Ranking Minority Member  
Representative Randy Hunt, Ranking Minority Member  
Senator Adam G. Hinds  
Senator Julian Cyr  
Senator Mark C. Montigny  
Senator Joseph A. Boncore  
Representative Brian M. Ashe  
Representative Christine P. Barber  
Representative Steven Ultrino  
Representative Joseph W. McGonagle, Jr.  
Representative William J. Driscoll, Jr.  
Representative Natalie M. Higgins  
Representative Brian W. Murray  
Representative Jon Santiago  
Representative Mathew J. Muratore  
Representative Lenny Mirra

Signed,

Municipal Leaders

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**Suzanne Carp**, Executive Director, Arlington Council on Aging

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**Andrea Campbell**, City Council President, District 4  
**Monica Valdes-Lupi**, Executive Director, Boston Public Health Commission

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**Claude Jacob**, Chief Public Health Officer

**CITY OF GLOUCESTER HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

**Karin Carroll**, Public Health Director

**LEXINGTON HOUSING AUTHORITY**

**Caileen Foley**, Executive Director

**TRI-TOWN HEALTH DISTRICT (Lee, Lenox & Stockbridge)**

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**Berkshire County Board of Health Association**

Gina Armstrong, President

**Berkshire Regional Planning Commission**

Thomas Matuszko, Executive Director

**Franklin Regional Council of Governments**

Linda Dunlavy, Executive Director

**Metropolitan Area Planning Council**

Marc Draisen, Executive Director

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**Advancing Wellness**

Mari Ryan, MBA, MHP, CWP, Founder/CEO

**AIDS Action/Fenway Health**

Carl Sciortino, Vice President of Government and Community Relations

**Alliance of Massachusetts YMCAs**

Peter Doliber, Executive Director

**American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network**

Marc Hymovitz, Massachusetts Government Relations Director

**American Diabetes Association**

Stephan Habbe, Director, State Government Affairs & Advocacy

**American Heart Association & American Stroke Association**

Allyson Perron Drag, Government Relations Director

**Connie Askin**

Executive Director, ChopChop Family\*

**Elena Carbone**

Chair of Department of Nutrition, University of Massachusetts Amherst \*

**Citizen's Housing & Planning Association**

Eric Shupin, Director of Public Policy

**Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation at Harvard Law School**

Katie Garfield, Clinical Instructor

**Community Care Cooperative**

Christina Severin, President & CEO

**Community Servings**

Jean Terranova, Director of Food and Health Policy

**DentaQuest Partnership for Oral Health Advancement**

Michael Monopoli, Executive Director of Grants Strategy

**The Disparities Solutions Center at Massachusetts General Hospital**

Aswita Tan-McGory, Director

**Michelle Drolsbaugh**

New England Director, Minding Your Mind\*

**Sandro Galea, MD, MPH, DrPH**

Dean, Boston University School of Public Health\*

**Green and Healthy Homes Initiative**

Ruth Ann Norton, President & CEO

**Grow a Strong Family**

Mara Briere, President & Founder

**Harvard Catalyst**

David Zielinski, Executive Director

**Paul Hattis, MD, JD, MPH**

Associate Professor of Public Health & Community Medicine, Tufts Medical School Professor\*

**Health Care For All**

Amy Rosenthal, Executive Director

**Health Care Without Harm**

Jennifer Obadia, Eastern US Director, Healthy Food in Health Care

**Health Resources in Action**

Steve Ridini, President & CEO

**Healthy Living Center of Excellence**

Jennifer Raymond, Director

**David Hemenway, PhD**

Professor of Health Policy; Co-Director Harvard Injury Control Research Center, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health\*

**Jewish Alliance for Law & Social Action**

Cindy Rowe, Executive Director

**John Snow, Inc.**

Stewart Landers, JD, Director, US Health Services, Boston Office

**Justice Resource Institute**

Andy Pond, President and CEO

**Howard K. Koh, MD, MPH**

Professor of the Practice of Public Health Leadership, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health\*

**The Latino Health Insurance Program, Inc.**

Milagros Abreu, Executive Director/President

**Massachusetts Academy of Nutrition & Dietetics**

Melanie Mott, President

**Massachusetts Association for Community Action**

Joseph Diamond, Executive Director

**Massachusetts Association for Mental Health**

Danna Mauch, PhD, Executive Director

**Massachusetts Association of Community Development Corporations**

David Bryant, Director of Advocacy

**Massachusetts Association of Community Health Workers**

Lisette Blondet, Executive Director

**Massachusetts Association of Health Boards**

Cheryl Sbarra, Senior Staff Attorney, Director of the Tobacco Cessation & Prevention Program & Chronic Disease Prevention Program

**Massachusetts Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics**

Elizabeth Goodman, MD, MBA, President

**Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless**

Robyn Frost, Executive Director

**Massachusetts Councils on Aging**

David P. Stevens, Executive Director

**Massachusetts Food System Collaborative**

Winton Pitcoff, Director

**Massachusetts Health Council**

David R. Martin, Esq., CEO

**Massachusetts Health Officers Association**

Dawn Sibor, Executive Director

**Massachusetts Housing & Shelter Alliance**

Joe Finn, President & Executive Director

**Massachusetts Law Reform Institute**

Georgia Katsoulomitis, Executive Director

**Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers**

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**Massachusetts Medical Society**

Maryanne Bombaugh, President

**Massachusetts Public Health Association**

Carlene Pavlos, Executive Director

**MLPB**

Samantha Morton, CEO

**Barbara Olendzki**

Director of Center for Applied Nutrition, University of Massachusetts Medical School\*

**Tobacco Free Mass**

Lauren A. Smith, MD, MPH, Chair

**Nancy Turnbull**

Senior Lecturer on Health Policy, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health\*

**WalkBoston**

Stacey Beuttell, Deputy Director

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---

**Action for Boston Community Development, Inc.**

John Drew, President/CEO

**Allston Brighton Health Collaborative**

Anna Leslie, Coordinator

**Aspire Health Alliance**

Lisa Braude, President and CEO

**Athol Area YMCA**

Jennifer Gordon, Executive Director

**Bay State Community Services**

Daurice Cox, Psy.D, CAS, President & CEO

**Berkshire Health Systems**

Cheryl Boudreau, Chief Executive Officer

**Beth Israel Deaconess Hospital – Milton**

Richard Fernandez, President

**Berkshire Family YMCA**

Jessica Rumlow, CEO

**Berkshire Public Health Alliance**

James Huebner, Chair, Governing Board

**Blue Hills Community Health Alliance (CHNA 20)**

Kym Williams, MPH, MBA, Program Director

**The Boston Foundation**

Paul Grogan, President & CEO

**Boston Medical Center Health System**

Melissa Shannon, Vice President for Government Affairs

**Boston Medical Center Injury Center**

Jonathan Howland, PhD, MPH, MPA, Director

**Central Mass Locavore**

Jacki Hildreth, Co-Owner & Director

**Central West Justice Center**

Leticia Medina-Richman, Managing Attorney

**Codman Square Health Center**

Sandra Cotterell, CEO

**Codman Square Neighborhood Development Corporation**

Gail Latimore, Executive Director

**Community Action Pioneer Valley**

Clare Higgins, Executive Director

**Community Health Center of Cape Cod**  
Karen Gardner, CEO

**Community Health Center of Franklin County**  
Edward Sayer, CEO

**Community Health Network for North Central Massachusetts**  
Chelsey Patriss, Executive Director

**Community Servings**  
Jean Terranova, Director of Food & Health Policy

**The Dimock Center**  
Nandini Sengupta, Medical Director of Health Services

**DotHouse Health**  
Michelle Nadow, CEO

**Duffy Health Center**  
Heidi Nelson, CEO

**Edward M. Kennedy Community Health Center**  
Stephen Kerrigan, President & CEO

**Elder Services of the Merrimack Valley**  
Joan Hatem Roy, Chief Executive Officer

**Enhance Asian Community on Health**  
Sara Tan, Executive Director

**Ethos**  
Dale Mitchell, Chief Executive Officer

**Family Health Center of Worcester, Inc.**  
Louis Brady, President/CEO

**Fresh Truck**  
Michael Lantow, Fresh Connect Program Director

**The Greater Boston Food Bank**  
Catherine Drennan, Director, Communications and Public Affairs

**Greater Boston Interfaith Organization**  
Bonny Gilbert and Michael Rubenstein, Co-Chairs, Health Care Team

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Kerry Mello, Chair

**Greater Holyoke YMCA**  
Kathleen Viens, CEO

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Paul Crowley, Chief Executive Officer

**Greater New Bedford Community Health Center**  
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Heather McMann, Executive Director

**Hampshire Regional YMCA**  
Julie Bianco, CEO

**Harbor Health Services**  
Charles Jones, President & CEO

**Harvard Street Neighborhood Health Center**  
Stan McLaren, President & CEO

**Healthy Living Cape Cod**  
Gina Battles, Program Coordinator

**Holyoke Health Center**  
Jay Breines, CEO

**Holyoke Medical Center**  
Carl Cameron, Chief Operating Officer

**Immigrants' Assistance Center, Inc.**  
Helena DaSilva Hughes, Executive Director

**Interfaith Social Services**  
Rick Doane, Executive Director

**Island Grown Initiative**  
Rebecca Haag, Executive Director

**Just Roots Inc.**  
Jessica O'Neill, Executive Director

**Life Connection Center Inc.**  
Jaime Dillon, Executive Director

**Malden YMCA**  
Debbie Amaral, CEO

**Manet Community Health Center**  
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**MetroWest YMCA**  
Rick Macpherson, President & CEO

**Mill City Grows**  
Francey Slater, Executive Director

**Montachusett Opportunity Council**  
Kevin Reed, Executive Director

**Northern Berkshire Community Coalition**  
Amber Besaw, Interim Executive Director

**Old Colony YMCA**

Vincent Marturano, President/CEO

**The Open Door**

Julie LaFontaine, Executive Director

**Public Health Institute of Western Massachusetts**

Jessica Collins, Executive Director

**Quincy Asian Resources, Inc.**

Joanne Kelly, Vice President, Administration & Finance

**Francie Randolph**

Founding Director, Sustainable CAPE\*

**South Shore Elder Services**

Sandra Lindsey, CEO

**South Shore Health**

Katrina Dwyer, Director Care Coordination/Community Benefits Officer

**South Shore YMCA**

Paul Gorman, President & CEO

**Springfield Dementia Friendly Coalition**

Synthia Scott-Mitchell, Chairwoman

**Springfield Partners for Community Action, Inc.**

Paul F. Bailey, Executive Director

**Margaret Rocchio**

Senior Director, Health Services, Boston Public Schools\*

**Risa Silverman**

Outreach Director, UMass School of Public Health and Health Sciences\*

**UMass Memorial Health Care**

Monica Lowell, Vice President Community Health Improvement

**Urban College of Boston**

Michael Taylor, President

**Wendell P. Clark Memorial YMCA**

Michael Quinn, Executive Director

**Western Massachusetts Public Health Association**

Sharon Hart, President

**Whittier Street Health Center**

Frederica M. Williams, President & CEO

**Worcester Public Schools**

Debra McGovern, Director of Nursing & Health Services

**YMCA Cape Cod**

Stacie Peugh, President & CEO

**YMCA of Central Massachusetts**

David Connell, President & CEO

**YMCA of Greater Boston**

James Morton, President/CEO

**YMCA of Metro North**

Kathleen Walsh, President & CEO

**YMCA of North Shore**

Christopher Lovasco, Chief Executive Officer

**YMCA Southcoast**

Jim Scherer, President & CEO