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Public Health Association Applauds Passage of Bill to Improve COVID-19 Data Reporting, Calls for Action to Address Inequities

BOSTON - In response to final passage of “An Act Addressing COVID-19 Data Collection and Disparities in Treatment” by the House and Senate today, Carlene Pavlos, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Public Health Association issued the following statement:

“We’re pleased with the very strong bill that was finalized by the House and Senate today, which provides for better data and increased legislative oversight to ensure Massachusetts is aggressively working to counter the inequitable impact of the pandemic on Massachusetts residents. Equally important to data reporting, the bill requires greater transparency from the Baker Administration about what actions they are taking to address the inequities shown in the data. Knowledge is crucial, but it’s only valuable if it leads to smart action. As Massachusetts considers additional stages of reopening, we must use data to ensure that communities of color, low wage workers, and other marginalized populations do not suffer further than they have already.”

The bill includes the following important provisions:

- requires enhanced data reporting on COVID-19 testing, infections, hospitalizations, and deaths, including demographic data on race/ethnicity, disability status, primary language, and occupation;
- requires regular reporting from the Baker Administration about what actions are being taken to address inequities; and
- establishes a legislative task force to make recommendations on addressing health disparities during the COVID-19 outbreak, including way to improve safety for populations at increased risk such as essential workers, individuals living in congregate settings or correctional facilities, individuals with underlying health conditions, and individuals living in communities that are disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.

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The Massachusetts Public Health Association (MPHA) is a nonprofit statewide organization focused on eliminating health inequities and creating healthy communities through advocacy, community organizing, and coalition-building.