

MEDIA ADVISORY

June 3, 2020

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Four Criteria for an Equitable Reopening to Be Announced Thursday by Public Health and Community Leaders

Advocates to call on Governor Baker not to allow a reopening at the expense of Black and Latinx communities

WHAT: Public health and community leaders will release four criteria that must be met before moving to Phase Two of reopening to ensure that low wage workers, communities of color, and other disproportionately-impacted populations are adequately protected.

WHEN and WHERE:

Thursday, June 4th, 9:00am

Zoom registration: <https://tinyurl.com/EquitableReopening>

WHO: The Task Force on Coronavirus & Equity, joined by dozens of supporting organizations, including the Black Boston COVID-19 Coalition, Massachusetts Coalition for Health Equity, Massachusetts Coalition for Occupational Safety and Health, Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center, Massachusetts Senior Action Council, Massachusetts Councils on Aging, Community Labor United, National Association of Social Workers – Massachusetts Chapter, and the ACLU of Massachusetts, among many others.

Confirmed speakers include:

- Carlene Pavlos, Executive Director, Massachusetts Public Health Association
- Dr. Atiya Martin, Member, Black Boston COVID-19 Coalition
- Roxana Rivera, Vice President, SEIU 32BJ New England District 615
- Oami Amarasingham, Deputy Legislative Director, ACLU of Massachusetts
- Al Vega, Director of Policy & Programs, Massachusetts Coalition for Occupational Safety and Health
- Helena DaSilva Hughes, Executive Director, Immigrant's Assistance Center
- Roxana Rivera, Vice President, SEIU 32BJ New England District 615

WHY: Governor Baker is slated to make an announcement in 3 days about whether to proceed with Phase Two of reopening. Yet, essential workers do not consistently have access to adequate testing, protective equipment, or workplace protections. Massachusetts continues to lack meaningful data to track how infection and death rates are trending among Black and Latinx residents. And communities of color and occupational health experts are notably absent from the groups advising Governor Baker on the reopening.

As the nation erupts in outrage to the deaths of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor and the countless other Black people who have been the targets of police violence and murder, it is clear that the structural racism that allows police brutality against Black residents to continue is the same structural racism that gives rise to racial health inequities and leads to the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on communities of color. Reopening without adequate protections is a policy decision about the value of Black and Latinx lives.

We reject the false choice between economic health and public health because they are two sides of the same coin. We know that employment – with good jobs that come with benefits and a living wage – is a critical determinant of health. We want a strong economy, and we want workers to return and small businesses to open as soon possible in a safe and equitable manner.

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