

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Carlene Pavlos, 857-544-9764, [cpavlos@mapublichealth.org](mailto:cpavlos@mapublichealth.org)

### **Public Health Association Applauds Signing of “An Act Addressing COVID-19 Data Collection and Disparities in Treatment”**

Yesterday, Governor Baker signed “An Act Addressing COVID-19 Data Collection and Disparities in Treatment,” a bill that the Legislature sent to him on May 28<sup>th</sup>. In response, Carlene Pavlos, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Public Health Association, issued the following statement:

*“We are pleased that Governor Baker signed this important and overdue bill into law. Public health experts have long known that social inequities are linked to poor health outcomes. When the coronavirus epidemic began, the Massachusetts Public Health Association was extremely concerned about how the virus would affect already marginalized populations. Addressing this issue has been a primary focus of our Task Force on Coronavirus & Equity.*

*If effectively implemented, this law will dramatically improve our understanding of how the pandemic is impacting marginalized communities in Massachusetts – including Black and Latinx residents, low-wage workers, people who don’t speak English, and people with disabilities. The bill will also improve transparency by requiring regular reporting from the Baker Administration on actions being taken to address inequities that exist in Massachusetts.*

*This level of data collection should have happened months ago, but later is better than never. Implementing this law effectively will require a significant improvement in how data is collected and reported in Massachusetts, so we expect to see an announcement in short order about how the Administration will accomplish these goals. We will be closely monitoring progress and providing periodic progress reports.*

*We stand ready to partner with the Governor to develop a response and recovery strategy that has equity for all residents at the center.”*

Last week, MPHA and a coalition of more than 100 organizations announced four criteria that Massachusetts should meet to avoid a major increase in the infection rate during reopening, especially among low wage workers, communities of color, people living in homeless shelters, and other populations that have already been disproportionately impacted by the virus. The criteria are:

- Infection Rates Dropping for All
- Enforceable Protections for Workers + Support for Small Businesses
- Testing, Testing, Testing
- A Seat at the Table

The full statement, description of the criteria, and a list of endorsing organizations is available here: <https://tinyurl.com/EquitableReopeningCriteria>.

“An Act Addressing COVID-19 Data Collection and Disparities in Treatment,” is now Chapter 93 of the Acts of 2020. The Legislature passed this measure as an emergency law, so it goes into effect immediately upon signing.

The Massachusetts Public Health Association (MPHA) is a non-profit, statewide organization focused on eliminating health inequities and creating healthy communities through advocacy, community organizing, and coalition-building. To learn more, visit [www.mapublichealth.org](http://www.mapublichealth.org).

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