July 23, 2020

Governor Charlie Baker  
Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito  
Massachusetts State House  
Boston, MA 02133

Secretary Marylou Sudders  
Executive Office of Health and Human Services  
One Ashburton Place  
Boston, MA 02108

Commissioner Monica Bharel  
Massachusetts Department of Public Health  
250 Washington St.  
Boston, MA 02108

Re: Strengthening the Massachusetts Local Health System

Dear Governor Baker, Lt. Governor Polito, Secretary Sudders, and Commissioner Bharel:

We write to you as leaders in local public health. We serve as local health directors and staff, health agents, public health nurses, and board of health members. We are frontline workers at the local level, and we have been working tirelessly over the last few months to protect our communities from COVID-19. We are grateful for the investments and support from the Baker-Polito Administration over the last four months that have supported our emergency response to the pandemic. And we are pleased to know that you are considering options to strengthen and invest in our Commonwealth’s local public health system so that it is better prepared to meet current and future challenges.

Massachusetts local health departments have been on the front lines of our state’s response to the COVID-19 crisis, leading critical response efforts including: investigating suspected cases, making testing recommendations, tracing contacts, and recommending and enforcing quarantine and isolation; enforcing essential business orders and re-opening guidance and providing input to businesses on safe operating procedures; and coordinating with town officials, first responders, businesses and residents, and serving as a communications hub between local residents and state officials.

Although our dedicated health department staff have been working tirelessly in the face of this crisis, our decentralized structure of 351 separate boards of health/local health departments lead to inequities in public health protections across municipalities, and they also put the entire state at risk. Because viruses do not respect municipal borders, the extreme variability of protections provided across municipal health departments increases danger and harm to all communities.

Now is the time to move rapidly to accelerate improvements to our local public health system to adequately protect public health and safety during the remainder of the COVID-19 crisis and for future threats to public health. There is significant urgency to begin this process in earnest in advance of a potential fall surge. The goals for a stronger system have already been outlined in the consensus recommendations of the [Special Commission on Local and Regional Health](#).
We stand ready to work with the Baker-Polito Administration to strengthen our local public health system. Massachusetts residents deserve a system that provides everyone with basic public health protections and that provides the needed funding to support core public health functions in every municipality.

Sincerely,

Evan Carloni, Senior Health Inspector, Acton
Mark Blaisdell, Code Enforcement Officer, Adams
David Rhoads, Chair, Board of Health, Adams
Gladys Fernandez-Largay, MD, Chair, Board of Health, Agawam
Kathleen Auer, Health Agent, Agawam
Mary Jo Safford, NP, Vice Chair, Board of Health, Agawam
Mary Lee Bertrand, BSN, Board of Health Member, Agawam
Jayne Smith, Health Agent, Alford and Dalton
Richard Berube, Deputy Director, Amesbury and Salisbury
Patricia Crafts, Health Inspector, Andover
Thomas Carbone, Director of Public Health, Andover
Deborah Enegess, Board of Health Member, Andover
Cherie Monahan, Public Health Nurse, Andover
Pamela Linzer, Chairperson, Board of Health, Andover
Erika Woods, Deputy Director, Barnstable County
Robert Ronzio, Board of Health Member, Becket
Katherine Dagle, Assistant Health Director, Board of Health, Bedford
Sandra Martin, Health Agent, Berkshire Public Health Alliance, Berkshire County
Pamela Parr-MacKay, Registered Nurse, Beverly
Diane Chalifoux-Judge, Principal Health Inspector, Boston
Rita Nieves, Interim Executive Director, Boston
Lisa Berger, Consultant, Boston
Thomas Curran, Health Inspector, Boston
Regina Hanson, Assistant Director, Housing Inspection Division, Inspectional Services, Boston
Nancy Ice, Retired Health Director, Brewster
Jean Kampas, Board of Health Member, Brewster
Carmen Scherzo, DVM, Chairman, Board of Health, Brewster
Amy Von Hone, Health Director, Brewster
Evelyne Lebrun, Lead Public Health Nurse, Brockton
Swannie Jett, Health Commissioner, Brookline
Martha Taft-Ferguson, Board of Health Member, Buckland
Samantha Hardy, Associate Health Inspector, Burlington
Judith Giorgio, Health Agent, Chatham
Claude Jacob, Chief Public Health Officer, Cambridge
Richard Day, Board of Health Member, Chelmsford
Luis Prado, Director Health and Human Services, Board of Health Agent, Chelsea
Mike Armano, Director for Local Board of Health, Inspectational Services Department, Lawrence
Solee Dennis, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Health and Human Services, Springfield
Daniel Doyle, MD, Chair, Board of Health, Dalton
Annette Graczewski, Health Agent, Board of Health, Dennis and Brewster
Agnieszka Podstawka RN, BSN, Town Nurse, Douglas
Tracy Mayo, Health Agent, Duxbury
Aimee Petrosky, Director of Public Health, East Longmeadow, Easthampton
Bri Eichstaedt, Health Agent, Easthampton
Maggie Hebert, RN, Chair, Board of Health, Easthampton
Charles Ogden, Chairman, Board of Health, Egremont
Juliette Haas, Director, Board of Health, Egremont
William Rose, Board of Health Member, Egremont
Tess Curran, Director, Health and Human Services, Fall River
Stephanie Holinko, Food Inspector, Fitchburg
Robin Chapell, Retired Health Director, Foxboro
Marc MacFarland, Sanitarian, Foxboro
Samuel Wong, Director of Public Health, Framingham
Kathleen Mahoney, Chief Public Health Nurse, Framingham
David Moore MD, Board of Health Member, Framingham
Robin Williams, Environmental Health Manager, Framingham
Derek Macedo, Health Agent, Freetown
Randy Crochier, Regional Health Agent, Gill
Michael Kurland, Chair, Board of Health, Goshen
Ruby Chang, MD FAAP, Great Barrington
Cheryl Pascucci, NP, Population Health Program Director, Greenfield
Marcelino Tex Sarabia, Chair, Board of Health, Hardwick
Betsy Kovacs, Chair, Board of Health, Heath
Fred Sears, Registered Sanitarian, Hinsdale
Debra Vescera, BSN RN (MSN Student Community/Public Health), Holden
Kasey Mauro, Public Health Nurse, Hopkinton
Joyce Sullivan, Health Director, Hull
Joan Taverna, Public Health Nurse, Hull
John Farnsworth, Chair, Board of Health, Lancaster
Katherine Holden, Board of Health Member, Lancaster
Nancy Simonds-Ruderman, Health Agent, Lanesborough
Mike Armano, Director for Local Board of Health / Inspectional Services Department, Lawrence
Robert Wespiser, Board of Health Member, Lee
James Wilusz, Executive Director, Lee, Lenox and Stockbridge
John Kearns, MD, Board of Health Member, Lenox
Noel Blagg, MD, Board of Health Member, Lenox
Kari Sasportas, Health Director, Lexington
Tricia McGean, RN, Lincoln
Joanne Belanger, Director of Health and Human Services, Lowell
Michele Desmarais, Public Health Director, Lynn
Amy Donovan-Palmer, Health Agent, Mansfield
Kathy Downey, Public Health Nurse, Marion
David Flaherty, Health Agent, Marion
James Griffin, Vice Chair, Board of Health, Marlborough
Yoann Antoine, Environmental Health Specialist, Medford
Allison Conboy, Senior Sanitarian, Medford
Deborah Rosati, Food Safety and Public Health Consultant, Melrose
Deborah Ketchen, Health Agent, Merrimac
Catherine Hassett, Health Inspector, Middleboro
Robert Buker, Health Officer, Middleborough
Jackie Duda, Health Agent, Middlefield
Derek Fullerton, Director of Public Health, Middleton
Julio Rodriguez, Board of Health Member, Monterey
Leila Mercer, Public Health Nurse, Natick
Jane Anderson, Environmental Health Agent, Natick
James White, Jr., Director of Public Health, Natick
Tiffany Zike, Public Health Nurse, Needham
Damon Chaplin, Health Director, New Bedford
Lawrence H. Davis III, Chairman, Board of Health, New Marlborough
Scott McFarland, Board of Health Agent, New Marlborough
Alan Hope, Managing Partner, North Andover
Merridith Oleary, Public Health Director, Northampton
Jennifer Meyer, Public Health Nurse Supervisor, Northampton
Sigalle Reiss, Public Health Director, Norwood
Darryl Darby, Board of Health Member, Peru
Peggy White, Board of Health Member, Peru
Laura Kittross, Director, Berkshire Public Health Alliance, Pittsfield
Alan Kulberg, Chair, Board of Health, Pittsfield
Gina Armstrong, Director, Health Department, Pittsfield
Kimberly Loring, Board of Health Member, Pittsfield
Morgan Clark, Health Director, Provincetown
Stephen Katsurinis, Chair, Board of Health, Provincetown
Dr. David Kaplan, Chairman, Board of Health, Randolph
Fred Schubert, Board of Health Member, Richmond
Louise Maron, Ph.D., Board of Health Member, Richmond
Peter Cohen, Board of Health Member, Richmond
Margaret Rice, Board of Health Member, Rowe
Philip Leger, Chair, Board of Health, Royalston
Roger Kohler, Board of Health Member, Sandisfield
Terry Estes, Board of Health Member, Shelburne Falls
Douglas Kress, Director of Health and Human Services, Somerville
Sharon Hart, Public Health Director, South Hadley
Sharon Hart, President, Western Mass Public Health Association, South Hadley
Jennifer Jernigan, Assistant Director of Public Health, South Hadley
Paul Pisinski, Public Health Director, Southborough
Charles Kenny, MD, Chair, Board of Health, Stockbridge
Hank Schwerner, Board of Health Member, Stockbridge
Rae Williams, RN, Board of Health Member, Stockbridge
Merrily Evdokimoff, Board of Health Member, Stow
Kenneth Lacey, Health Agent, Sturbridge
Tricia Valiton, Health Inspector, Sturbridge
Phyllis Schilp, Public Health Nurse, Sudbury
Jeffrey Vaughan, Director of Public Health, Swampscott
Shannon Sullivan, Sanitarian, Tewksbury
Maria Zaroulis, Board of Health Member, Tewksbury
Susan Sawyer, Health Director, Tewksbury
Melissa Ranieri, Health Director, **Walpole**

James Huebner, Chair, Board of Health and Berkshire Public Health Alliance, **Washington**

Wil van Dinter, Public Health Nurse, **Watertown**

Beth Grossman, Health Inspector, **Wayland**

Ruth Mori, Public Health Nurse, **Wayland**

Lauren Kennedy, Environmental Health Specialist, **West Springfield**

Earl Moffatt, Board of Health Agent, **West Stockbridge**

Omar Johnson, Health Agent, **West Tisbury**

Erin Hightower, Health Inspector, **Westborough**

Joseph Rouse, Director of Public Health, **Westfield**

Rae Dick, Director of Environmental Services, **Westford**

Jeffrey Stephens, Health Director, **Westford**

Ann Loree, Health Agent, **Westminster**

Mary Williamson, MS, RS, **Weymouth**

Francis Fortino, Chairperson, Board of Health, **Whately**

Rebecca Jones MD, Board of Health, **Whately**

Jill Conselino, Public Health Nurse, **Wilbraham**

Erwin Stuebner MD, Board of Health, **Williamstown**

Ruth Harrison, Board of Health Member, **Williamstown**

Traci Mello, Public Health Nurse, **Wilmington and Middleton**

Matilde Castiel, Commissioner of Health and Human Services, **Worcester**

James Starbard, Massachusetts State Lead, **Worcester**

Jeanine Murphy, Public Health Nurse, **Wrentham**

Mallory Langler, Assistant Director of Health, **Yarmouth**