

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, Inspectional Services Department, **Lawrence**

Soloe Dennis, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Health and Human Services, **Springfield**

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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**

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Michael Kurland, Chair, Board of Health, **Goshen**

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David Flaherty, Health Agent, **Marion**

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Yoann Antoine, Environmental Health Specialist, **Medford**

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Deborah Rosati, Food Safety and Public Health Consultant, **Melrose**

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Catherine Hassett, Health Inspector, **Middleboro**

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Jennifer Meyer, Public Health Nurse Supervisor, **Northampton**

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Peggy White, Board of Health Member, **Peru**

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Stephen Katsurinis, Chair, Board of Health, **Provincetown**

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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**

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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**

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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**