

For Immediate Release

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Public Health Advocates Call for Immediate Legislative Action to Avert Public Health Catastrophe

Expiration of Moratorium in Four Days May Lead to 100,000 Evictions

Boston, MA – Today, a coalition of more than 300 public health and health care leaders from across Massachusetts delivered an [open letter](#), calling on Governor Charlie Baker, Senate President Karen Spilka, and House Speaker Robert DeLeo to take immediate action to avert a massive wave of evictions that are expected to take place as soon as the state’s eviction moratorium is lifted on Saturday, October 17.

“The moratorium on evictions and foreclosures expires in four days, leaving more than 100,000 Massachusetts households at risk of eviction, housing insecurity, and homelessness,” said **Carlene Pavlos, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Public Health Association**. “Governor Baker’s announcement yesterday of new resources to support tenants was necessary, but his actions are woefully insufficient to address the scale of crisis facing Massachusetts renters.”

Advocates are urging passage of the [Guaranteed Housing Stability Bill](#) (H5018/S2918), sponsored by Rep. Mike Connolly, Rep. Kevin Honan, and Sen. Patricia Jehlen. The bill will protect tenants who are unable to pay rent due to the impact of COVID-19, and it will also create a fund to assist property owners who have lost income due to the pandemic (with a focus on working-class, small, owner-occupied, and nonprofit landlords).

“Stable housing is absolutely foundational for health - and even more critical during a pandemic,” said **Howard Koh, MD, PhD, Professor of the Practice of Public Health Leadership at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, former US Assistant Secretary of Health, and former Commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health**. “We are facing an urgent public health deadline, with the state preparing to lift the eviction moratorium this Saturday. We cannot risk seeing more vulnerable people forced onto the street, thereby exacerbating an already unacceptable homelessness crisis. That is why all of our political leaders must collectively act now to keep thousands of families in their homes.”

"Doubling down on our commitment to housing those most vulnerable will make communities healthier," said **Representative Jon Santiago**. "If we give someone housing, we decrease their likelihood of getting infected with COVID-19, and we can save lives while healing communities. As an ER physician and legislator, I fully support extending the eviction and foreclosure moratorium."

“Housing is inextricably linked to health,” said **Frank Robinson, Vice President for Public Health and Community Relations at Baystate Health**. “The healthy housing movement and research shows that housing quality and stability significantly impact child development and educational attainment and has health-protective effects for all. Without a doubt, the Housing Stability Bill is an essential health-protective intervention necessary to prevent the further degradation of health in low-income, Black, indigenous, and people of color populations.”

A study released in late June by MIT and City Life/Vida Urbana found that market-rate evictions in Boston Housing Court were 70% more likely to occur in census tracts where the majority of the residents are people of color, even though these areas only represent about half of the rental housing in the city. The study also found that during the COVID-19 pandemic, over 78% of all evictions filed in Boston during the pandemic (in the 7 weeks from the first outbreak to the moment evictions were banned) are in census tracts where the majority of residents are people of color, further demonstrating how these two issues are linked and compound on each other. For more information about the study, visit http://www.clvu.org/jce_hia.

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The Massachusetts Public Health Association (MPHA) is a nonprofit organization that promotes a healthy Massachusetts through advocacy, community organizing, and coalition building. We are leaders in the movement to create health equity by addressing the root causes of health and wellness. We promote policies that impact the major drivers of health outcomes, such as access to healthy food, safe affordable housing, and transportation. We also advocate for equitable public health services throughout the Commonwealth. To learn more, visit www.mapublichealth.org.