

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: MEDIA ADVISORY**

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**Public Health Experts and Local Officials to call for Reforms to  
Fractured and Inconsistent Local Health System at Hearing**

**WHEN and WHERE:**

Friday, November 6, 2020, 11:00am, Online

Stream the live hearing here: <https://malegislature.gov/Events/Hearings/Detail/3598>

**WHAT:**

This Friday, public health experts, municipal and regional officials, and healthcare leaders will testify in support of the Statewide Accelerated Public Health for Every Community Act (H.5045/S.2922) at an online hearing held by the Legislature's Joint Committee on Public Health. The proposed bill would:

- create minimum public health standards for every community,
- ensure a qualified workforce,
- incentivize municipalities to share services,
- create a uniform data collection and reporting system, and
- dedicate state funding to support local boards of health and health departments.

**WHO:**

Speakers will include:

- Kristina Kimani, Assistant Policy Director, Massachusetts Public Health Association
- Cheryl Sbarra, Executive Director, Massachusetts Association of Health Boards
- Sigalle Reiss, President, MA Health Officers Association; Health Director, Town of Norwood
- Bill Murphy, Vice President, MA Environmental Health Association; Director of Public Health, Town of Sudbury
- Eileen McAnney, President, Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation
- Dr. Mark Keroack, President & CEO, Baystate Health
- John Welch, Dir. of Partnerships & Operations for MA COVID Response, Partners in Health
- Kevin Mizikar, Town Manager, Town of Shrewsbury
- Karyn Clark, Director, Worcester Division of Public Health
- Phoebe Walker, Director of Community Services, Franklin Regional Council of Governments
- Mike Hugo, Government Affairs, Massachusetts Association of Health Boards
- Damon Chaplin, Director, City of New Bedford, Department of Public Health
- Tess Curran, Director of Health and Human Services, City of Fall River
- Meredith Hurley, Director, Winthrop Department of Public Health & Clinical Services

**WHY:**

Every Massachusetts resident deserves strong public health protections, regardless of zip code. Our state's current local public health system, organized through 351 municipal health departments and boards of health, is inefficient and inequitable. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the critical role of local public health and revealed the inadequacies of the current system. The Statewide Accelerated Public Health for Every Community Act (SAPHE 2.0) will significantly improve public health in Massachusetts. It will direct the Massachusetts Department of Public Health to establish minimum standards for local public health departments and boards, set out a clear timeline for communities to reach those standards, establish state funding to support communities in meeting benchmarks, and create a uniform data collection and reporting system.

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](http://www.mapublichealth.org). ###