

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 4, 2021

Contact: Carlene Pavlos, Massachusetts Public Health Association
857-302-7023; cpavlos@mapublichealth.org

Public Health Group Applauds Vaccination Equity Bill

Calls for Immediate State Action to Overcome Barriers

Boston, MA – Today, the Massachusetts Public Health Association (MPHA) issued a statement of support for *An Act Effectuating Equity in COVID-19 Vaccination* (SD699/HD1283), which was filed today by State Senators Becca Rausch and Sonia Chang-Diaz and State Representatives Liz Miranda and Mindy Domb.

The Act will require Governor Baker to appoint a full-time Director of COVID-19 Vaccination Equity and Outreach, who will plan and implement actions to overcome inequities in COVID-19 vaccination rates, which are rooted in historic and current racism; biases based on ethnicity, income, primary language, immigration status, or disability; and other limitations, such as access to transportation and/or the Internet.

The Act will also get vaccination information & support directly to people in the hardest-hit communities through partnerships with local organizations, create a mobile vaccination program designated to reach communities with the highest rates of COVID-19, and increase transparency and accountability of the state's vaccine efforts.

"This Act includes crucial actions for achieving equity in vaccination rates," said MPHA Executive Director Carlene Pavlos. "We have safe and effective vaccines -- now we must make certain that those who are most impacted by structural racism, poverty and xenophobia have equitable access."

"A focus on equity benefits everyone," continued Pavlos. "We will only succeed in controlling this virus by directing resources to communities with the highest rates of infection and death. We must work diligently and in partnership with trusted local leaders to ensure that residents have the opportunity to be vaccinated quickly."

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. ###