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With Infection Rate Rising, Coalition Calls on Gov. Baker to Return to Earlier Phase of Reopening

Call for Limits on Indoor Gatherings to Curb Spread

Boston, MA – Eleven days ago, 29 members of the Task Force on Coronavirus & Equity, including the Massachusetts Public Health Association (MPHA), issued an [open letter to Governor Baker](#), urging him to delay increasing indoor capacity limits as part of his reopening plan. Now, infection rates are rising across the state, the number of high risk “red” communities is steadily increasing, and Massachusetts is making national headlines for its resurgence.

“The Governor must act to reduce indoor capacity limits on restaurants, exhibition and convention halls, theaters, museums and other indoor venues,” said MPHA Executive Director Carlene Pavlos. “Action must be swift if we are to prevent a resurgence.”

“Governor Baker has said repeatedly that he is following the science, yet he is now disregarding the most up-to-date guidance from the CDC, which strongly recommends that states keep mitigation measures in place until a greater share of the population is vaccinated,” continued Pavlos. “If the Governor asserts that he is listening to public health experts, he should be transparent and name his advisors. The people being put at risk by his actions deserve to know whose guidance is driving these decisions.”

The lifting of many indoor restrictions in Massachusetts comes at the same time that more infectious variants of COVID-19, including the B.1.17 variant (first identified in the United Kingdom) and the B.1.351 variant (first identified in South Africa) are spreading across the state. The challenge created by these variants has recently caused several European countries to resort to lockdowns once again.

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. ###