

For Immediate Release

November 3, 2021

Contact: Maddie Ribble, Massachusetts Public Health Association, 617-697-2107

(c) mribble@mapublichealth.org

Public Health Leaders Cheer Senate Investment in Local Public Health

Proposed Investments Will Transform Broken System

BOSTON, MA – Today, the Massachusetts Public Health Association (MPHA) issued the following statement in response to the release of the Senate Ways and Means Committee’s ARPA bill, which allocates \$250M over five years towards improving the state’s local public health system.

"The public health investments in this bill will truly be transformational," said **Maddie Ribble, Director of Public Policy at the Massachusetts Public Health Association**. "After decades of debate, this funding will finally set Massachusetts on a path to fix our broken local public health system and ensure that every resident – regardless of income, race or zip code – has access to real local health protections. We are extremely grateful for the commitment and decisive leadership of Senate President Karen Spilka, Chair Michael Rodrigues, and Vice Chair Cindy Friedman, as well as for the tireless advocacy of Senator Jo Comerford."

Together with the SAPHE 2.0 legislation, this investment will implement the 2019 unanimous recommendations of the Special Commission on Local and Regional Public Health, which established a blueprint for transforming our current system.

"Today’s action follows upon crucial House investments led by Speaker Ron Mariano, Chair Aaron Michlewitz, and Chair Marjorie Decker and years of advocacy by Chair Denise Garlick and Representative Hannah Kane," said Ribble. "This is a truly a bipartisan, bi-cameral effort that will foster sustainable changes for decades to come."

MPHA is part of a coalition of public health experts, local and state officials, and academic leaders that have been calling for an infusion of federal funding to transform Massachusetts’ dangerously inadequate local public health system. The group has asked the Legislature to invest American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds coming to Massachusetts from the federal government towards building a local public health system that is equitable, efficient and effective. The funding would be used to:

- Establish integrated, 21st century data systems

- Invest in workforce development to ensure that every community benefits from the expertise of trained professionals, and
- Eliminate the significant inequities in public health services and capacity between municipalities

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. ###