



For Immediate Release

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**On 2nd Anniversary of COVID State of Emergency,
Public Health Association Calls on State Leaders to Rebuild Public
Health in MA**

BOSTON, MA – Today, two years after a state of emergency was declared in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Massachusetts Public Health Association (MPHA) called on state leaders to rebuild and reimagine the role of public health in Massachusetts.

“The COVID-19 pandemic taught us many hard lessons. The failure to center both equity and public health expertise in the state’s response to the pandemic cost us dearly,” said **Carlene Pavlos, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Public Health Association**. “Now, we must commit to building a 21st-century public health system that will provide robust protections to all Massachusetts residents, regardless of income, race or zip code.”

Given that public health will be a central issue in this election cycle, MPHA will be asking gubernatorial candidates to fill out a questionnaire regarding their public health-related platforms.

“When COVID hit, years of disinvestment in public health meant that state and local infrastructure had been whittled away to the bare minimum. We must ensure that the same mistake is not repeated, and to that end, we will be asking all candidates about their commitment to public health,” continued Pavlos.

MPHA will also be asking gubernatorial candidates how they plan to structure the role of the Department of Public Health, in order to ensure that public health leaders and experts have a seat at the next administration’s policy-making table.

“It is time to reimagine and fully invest in public health in our Commonwealth,” added Pavlos. “We must honor the more than 20,000 Massachusetts residents who have died from COVID by learning everything we can from this pandemic and using best practices as we move forward.”

MPHA plans to release the questionnaire in the coming weeks.

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. ###