



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **MPHA Applauds Governor Healey for Signing New Law To Transform Local Public Health System**

**BOSTON, MA** – The Massachusetts Public Health Alliance (MPHA) celebrated a major victory for local public health in Massachusetts with today's signing of the Statewide Accelerated Public Health for Every Community (SAPHE 2.0) Act by Governor Maura Healey. SAPHE 2.0 was passed by the legislature as part of the Economic Development Bond Bill. The landmark law will significantly strengthen the state's local public health system and improve consistent and equitable public health responses across the Commonwealth.

MPHA's advocacy to shore up Massachusetts' local public health system long predates the COVID-19 pandemic and the current election cycle, but these two seismic events threw into sharp relief the urgent need for SAPHE 2.0 to help foster public health and equity.

"For too long our local public health workforce has been stretched to the breaking point, responding to a relentless stream of public health challenges—from devastating weather events fueled by climate change to the opioid crisis and the viral spread of health disinformation," said **Oami Amarasingham, Deputy Director of the Massachusetts Public Health Alliance.**

Amarasingham went on to say, "Now that SAPHE 2.0 is law, Massachusetts can move forward to ensure that strong public health protections are available to all residents – regardless of race, income, or zip code. The passage of SAPHE 2.0 is a monumental step forward for health equity and public health, particularly critical in the wake of the national elections and potentially dangerous changes to the national public health ecosystem. In the coming months and years, state leaders will need to take bold action to protect the health and safety of *all* Massachusetts residents.

"We are deeply grateful for the leadership of the Healey-Driscoll Administration, House and Senate leaders, and SAPHE 2.0 lead sponsors, Senator Jo Comerford and Representative Hannah Kane. We are also inspired and humbled by the local health professionals and advocates who educate the legislature about their daily work to meet the range of public health issues impacting the lives and well-being of communities."

SAPHE 2.0 creates minimum public health standards for every Massachusetts community, ensures a qualified workforce by credentialing public health workers, incentivizes municipalities to increase efficiency by sharing services, creates a uniform data collection and reporting system, and dedicates state funding to support local boards of health and health departments. The legislation implements [recommendations](#) of the Special Commission on Local and Regional Public Health, issued in June 2019, as well as a [recommendation](#) from the Report of the Joint Committee on COVID-19 and Emergency Preparedness and Management, which was issued in June 2022. SAPHE 2.0 is supported by a broad coalition of public health experts, municipal and state officials, and academic leaders that have been urging the legislature to take action to transform the local public health system in Massachusetts.

The Massachusetts Public Health Alliance (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).

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