

FY2020 BUDGET REQUEST

February 27, 2019

Dear Legislator:

We ask for your support to adequately fund programs that support healthy communities and promote health equity for all Massachusetts residents in the FY20 budget.

PUBLIC HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE

- **State Action for Public Health Excellence (SAPHE) Program — fund at \$1.7m (new).** Our local public health system faces significant structural and financial challenges meeting responsibilities to safeguard our food, water, and air quality; ensure safe and healthy housing conditions; and control communicable diseases; among others. The SAPHE Program will advance the recommendations of the Special Commission on Local & Regional Public Health by increasing training opportunities, incentivizing sharing of services across municipalities to increase efficiency and effectiveness and laying the groundwork to establish 21st century local public health standards for Massachusetts.
- **Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Trust Fund (1595-4506) — fund at \$2.7m (level with H1).** Childhood lead poisoning can cause irreversible neurological damage; it disproportionately impacts low-income kids and children of color in Gateway Cities and Boston. This funding will allow timely response to cases of childhood lead poisoning – including providing family case management, housing inspections, and code enforcement to eliminate lead hazards; as well as support enhanced prevention activities to proactively eliminate lead poisoning. *History: H1: \$2.7m.*
- **Bureau of Environmental Health (BEH) (4510-0600) — fund at \$4,144,531 (level with H1).** Strong public health infrastructure is the foundation on which a high standard of living and dynamic economy depends. BEH protects all residents from hazardous exposures and environmentally induced illness - including foodborne illness, communicable disease, harmful radiation and lead exposure, and unsafe housing. *History: H1: \$4.1m, FY19: \$4.06m, FY18: \$3.7m.*

SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH: TRANSPORTATION & HOUSING

- **Regional Transit Authorities (RTAs) (1595-6370) — fund at \$90.5m in base funding (increase over FY19).** RTAs, serving 262 communities outside of Greater Boston, connect residents, especially low-income residents and seniors, to medical care, substance use treatment, groceries, jobs, education and other drivers of good health outcomes. Additional funding is needed to improve and expand service. *History: H1: \$82m in base funding + \$4m in discretionary funds, FY19: \$82m in base funding + \$6m in discretionary funds, FY16: \$82m in base funding.*
- **Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (MRVP) (7004-9024) — fund at \$130m (increase over FY19).** Stable, safe and affordable housing is fundamental to good health. The number of households experiencing housing instability and homelessness persists as MA remains one of the most expensive states in the nation. Additional funding will increase the stock of affordable housing, produce new vouchers, and adjust the fair market rental cap. Access to housing vouchers has been shown to increase stability and improve health outcomes for adults and kids, *History: H1: \$100m, FY19: \$100m, FY18: \$92.7m.*

- continued on reverse -

SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH: HEALTHY FOOD ACCESS

- **Massachusetts Food Trust Program (within 2511-0100) — fund at \$100,000** (level with FY19). The Food Trust Program, launched in 2018, provides loans, grants, and technical assistance to support new and expanded food retailers in low- and moderate-income communities to increase healthy food access and spur economic growth. These funds support program operations, outreach, and technical assistance, and they leverage \$1M in capital funding included in the Governor's FY19 capital budget. *History: H1: not included; FY19: \$100K, FY18: \$100K.*
- **Mass in Motion (within 4513-1111) — maintain language** (consistent with FY19). This language ensures Mass in Motion (MIM) will receive funding no less than in the last fiscal year. The MIM program, covering more than 60 communities, is successfully helping to improve access to healthy eating and physical activity in schools, neighborhood retailers, parks, playgrounds, and streets. State funding for MIM is contingent on federal matching funds and leverages private funding. *History: H1: not included, FY15-FY19: language included.*
- **Healthy Incentives Program (within 4400-1001) — fund at \$8.5m** (increase over FY19). Increases healthy food access by providing a one-for-one match, adding money back onto a SNAP recipient's EBT card when they use it to purchase fresh fruits or vegetables at a participating farm stand, farmers market, CSA, or mobile market. SNAP sales at farm retailers increased by 600% - to \$8.3m - from 2016-2017 thanks to HIP. *History: H1: \$5.3m, FY19: \$6.35m, FY18: \$1.35m.*
- **Closing the SNAP Gap (within 4000-0300) — update language** (modified from FY19). The "SNAP Gap" refers to the 740K+ people who are enrolled in MassHealth and likely eligible for SNAP (food assistance), but who aren't receiving benefits. This language directs EOHHS to establish a pilot to allow residents to apply for SNAP automatically when applying for or renewing MassHealth or Medicare Savings Program benefits. *History: H1: not included, FY19: related language included.*

CLINICAL CARE & SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

- **Data Transparency on MassHealth Social Determinants of Health Supports (within 4000-0500) — maintain language** (consistent with FY19). This language ensures the availability of data from MassHealth about screening and interventions related to the social determinants of health (e.g., housing, food insecurity) for approximately 850,000 MassHealth members enrolled in accountable care organizations (ACOs). This data (aggregated and protective of patient privacy) is essential to understand the activities, successes, and challenges of the new MassHealth ACO program. *History: H1: not included, FY19: language included.*

We thank you for your partnership to support a healthy and equitable Commonwealth. For more information, please contact Maddie Ribble at 617-697-2107 or mribble@mapublichealth.org.

Sincerely,



Carlene Pavlos
Executive Director



Maddie Ribble
Director of Public Policy