



Dear Friends:

As members of the MHSA community, you have consistently demonstrated how much you care about your neighbors experiencing homelessness – those who are already vulnerable and are now especially at risk due to COVID-19. We know you share our concern for the frontline staff who are responding to this pandemic, too often without the personal protective equipment they need to stay safe. We're writing to stay connected with you and keep you updated on the vital work MHSA and our partners are engaged in across the Commonwealth in the face of this pandemic. **The stakes are high, and we need to act now.**

MHSA has stepped up our advocacy for a comprehensive and coordinated response to this emergency. We are also advocating for increased resources to meet the needs of agencies serving those experiencing homelessness and those who have been housed but are now isolated from important stabilization services. [Your support](#) is essential in making this critical advocacy possible.

I'd like to share some of the work that has been going on:

- MHSA is facilitating a weekly permanent supportive housing call with more than 125 staff from our member agencies across the Commonwealth. These calls give MHSA a valuable statewide look at the impact of this pandemic on those who are on the front lines, enabling us to respond quickly to concerns as they arise and to advocate for resources that are urgently needed.
- A member of MHSA's staff has been working daily with the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA), quantifying the number of alternative beds needed for shelter guests to maintain a safe distance from others to avoid the spread of the virus, identifying where those beds can be found, and serving as a link between local providers and the state.
- MHSA made a request to state leadership for \$10.8 million to support permanent supportive housing providers, who are faced with staggering costs as they work to keep thousands of people with disabilities who have experienced homelessness safe and stable in their homes. From stepping in to support tenants whose usual support networks – such as meal programs – have closed, to emergency staffing and sanitation needs, these agencies are working tirelessly and are in urgent need of resources.

In a recent opinion piece for [Commonwealth Magazine](#) highlighting the City of Worcester's response to COVID-19, I wrote that "saving lives requires a detailed plan – like the one implemented in Worcester – trained staff, sufficient supplies, compassion, and coordinated efforts to counter this crisis now, rather than waiting to play 'catch-up' later." We know we can't afford to wait, and we hope you'll help us continue our vital work during this time of great need by [donating](#) today. Be safe.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joe Finn". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping "J" and "F".

Joe Finn
President & Executive Director