



Massachusetts Healthy  
Communities System



Health Resources in Action  
*Advancing Public Health and Medical Research*

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## Hundreds of Municipal, Healthcare, and Civic Leaders Call on Legislature To Focus on Prevention in Payment Reform

A growing chorus of Massachusetts leaders are calling on the state Legislature include a robust program of community-based prevention – including dedicated funding – in the next phase of health reform. A coalition of public health and health care organizations delivered a letter to legislative leaders on September 12<sup>th</sup>, and the supporters of that letter continue to expand. The letter currently includes more than 300 signatures, of which 122 are Massachusetts organizations, municipalities, or businesses. The letter and full list of signers can be viewed at [www.MPHAweb.org](http://www.MPHAweb.org). New signers are being accepted at this website as well.

The letter is part of a broader campaign aimed at improving health outcomes and reducing healthcare costs organized by the Massachusetts Public Health Association, Health Care for All, Health Resources in Action, the Boston Public Health Commission, and the Massachusetts Healthy Communities System.

Among the signatures are -

- **Mayors and town managers**, including Boston Mayor Thomas M. Menino, New Bedford Mayor Scott W. Lang, Fall River Mayor William Flanagan, Peabody Mayor Michael Bonfanti, Revere Mayor Thomas Ambrosino, Somerville Mayor Joseph Curtatone, Weymouth Mayor Susan Kay, Woburn Mayor Scott Galvin, Worcester Mayor Joseph O'Brien, and Winthrop Town Manager James McKenna.
- **Local public health officials**, including MA Health Officers Association, MA Association of Health Boards, and public health department directors from Boston, Lynn, Fall River, New Bedford, Melrose, Egremont, Newton, Norwood, Springfield, and Westford.
- **Philanthropic, business, and labor leaders**, including Celia Wcislo, The Boston Foundation, The Health Foundation of Central MA, Larson Ventures Inc. President John Larson, William Gallagher Associates CEO Philip Edmundson, and Greater Boston Hotel Employees/Local 26 Trust Funds.
- **Healthcare leaders**, including Nancy Turnbull, the MA Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, Association for Behavioral Healthcare, Baystate Health, Cooley Dickinson Hospital, MA League of Community Health Centers, MA Medical Society, and MA School Nurse Organization.
- **Statewide and local organizations**, including the Greater Boston Interfaith Organization, American Diabetes Association-New England, American Cancer Society-New England Division, Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), Berkshire Area Health Education Center, Cape

Care Coalition, Codman Square Neighborhood Council, Disability Policy Consortium, Groundwork Lawrence, Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action, Livable Streets Alliance, Lynn Health Task Force, MA Association of Community Development Corporations, Mass Bike, Walk Boston, Massachusetts PTA, Partners for a Healthier Community/Live Well Springfield, Catholic Charities of Worcester, Project Bread – The Walk for Hunger, the MA Health Council, Voices for a Healthy Southcoast, and the MA Board of Rabbis.

“We spend most of our health care dollars caring for individuals once they’ve already become sick, and only three percent of our health care dollars on preventing diseases from developing in the first place,” said Valerie Bassett, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Public Health Association. “We are saying to the legislature that in order for payment reform to succeed, prevention must be at the center.”

The coalition cited rising medical costs – comprised mostly of preventable conditions – as one reason they organized the campaign. A January, 2011 study published in the American Journal of Public Health found that a mere 5% reduction in the costs of treating diabetes and hypertension could save the Commonwealth nearly \$500 million each year.

Amy Whitcomb Slemmer, Executive Director of Health Care For All and a convener of the Campaign for Better Care said, “The opportunity that we have before us today – to enact comprehensive payment reform that emphasizes prevention and wellness, not only disease treatment – may not come again for decades.”

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#### *More About the Coalition Partners*

- **The Massachusetts Public Health Association** is a statewide membership organization of people working to protect the health and safety of all our Commonwealth’s residents. MPHA is working for a healthy Massachusetts by promoting laws, policies, and programs that protect the health of our families, communities, and workplaces.
- **Health Resources in Action** has been a leader in developing programs that advance public health and medical research for over fifty years. Through Community Health and Medical Foundation divisions, we work with governments, communities, scientists, and nonprofit organizations that share an imperative for resolving today’s most critical public health issues through policy, research, prevention, and health promotion.
- **Health Care For All** seeks to create a consumer-centered health care system that provides comprehensive, affordable, accessible, culturally competent, high quality care and consumer education for everyone, especially the most vulnerable. We work to achieve this as leaders in public policy, advocacy, education and service to consumers in Massachusetts.
- **The Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC)** is the health department for the City of Boston and an independent public agency providing a wide range of health services and programs. The mission of BPHC is to protect, promote, and preserve the health and wellbeing of all Boston residents, particularly the most vulnerable.
- **The Massachusetts Healthy Communities System** is the premier statewide resource for technical assistance, training, and consulting for healthy communities in a way that mobilizes stakeholders and addresses social and economic factors that affect community health to build and sustain communities.