March 6, 2017

Dear Legislator,

We ask for your support to adequately fund programs that support healthy families and promote health equity for all Massachusetts residents in the FY18 budget.

**Top Priorities**

- **Prevention and Wellness Trust Fund.** PWTF is the first program of its kind in the nation and a national model for improving health and tackling costly conditions outside the clinic. PWTF has increased access to preventive services for nearly 1 million people across every region of the Commonwealth and will have an ever greater impact in the future. An independent evaluator found results on health impacts, cost-effectiveness, potential for cost savings, and systems innovation – and concluded that the program warrants further investment. PWTF does not rely on any state funding, but is supported through a small assessment on health insurers. Funding will sunset and the program will be dismantled in June 2017 without legislative action. Please include outside section language consistent with S643/HD2638.

- **Close the SNAP Gap and Create a Common Application Portal.** There are nearly 680,000 residents who are likely eligible for SNAP (food assistance) but not receiving benefits. Creating a common application portal for MassHealth, SNAP, and other benefits will ensure that all residents receive the assistance for which they are eligible and keep their families healthy.
  - **DTA Caseworker Line Item (4400-1100) - fund at $72,698,291** ($1.9m over FY17). To hire additional SNAP workers to manage a higher caseload as the state closes the SNAP Gap.
  - **Common Application IT (4000-0010) – fund at $2,000,000** (new funding). These funds will be used towards the IT costs involved in creating a common application portal for core federal and state nutrition, health care, and safety-net programs.

- **Massachusetts Food Trust (dedicate within 2000-0100) – fund at $100,000** (level with FY17). Too many communities have poor access to healthy food and lack strong local job opportunities. The Food Trust, established in law in 2014, will provide loans, grants, and technical assistance to support new and expanded food retailers and local food enterprises in low and moderate income communities to increase healthy food access and spur economic growth. These funds will support program operations, outreach, and technical assistance, and leverage bond funds which have previously been authorized and are expected to be released in FY18. (Previously within 7007-0300). **Funding history:** FY17: $100K.

- **Mass in Motion (within 4513-1111) – fund line item at $3,929,010** (level with FY17); **include language to maintain dedicated funding for Mass in Motion.** This program, operating in more than 60 communities, is improving healthy eating and physical activity in schools, and improving access to safe streets, parks, and playgrounds. Mass in Motion communities show a decrease in overweight children compared to the state as a whole. State funding leverages federal matching funds and private dollars. **Funding history:** FY17: $3.92M; FY18 H1: $3.46M.
● **Environmental Public Health Services (4510-0600) – fund at $3,938,554** (level with FY17). The Bureau of Environmental Health protects all residents from hazardous exposures and environmentally-induced illness. The Bureau includes food safety, radiation control, testing at swimming beaches and public pools, indoor air quality testing at schools and other public buildings, and medical waste disposal, among others. *Funding history: FY09: $4.59M; FY17: $3.94M; FY18 H1: $3.74M.*

**ADDITIONAL PRIORITIES**

● **Diversion to Treatment (4512-0202) – fund at $10,000,000** ($8m above FY17). To stop the opioid epidemic, it is necessary to recognize that substance use disorder is a disease, not a crime. Additional funding is needed to expand the statewide pre-adjudication Jail Diversion program to divert non-violent offenders out of the criminal justice system and to treatment, ensuring that offenders with substance use disorders receive needed treatment. *Funding history: FY17: $2M; FY18 H1: $2M.*

● **Bureau of Substance Abuse Services (4512-0200) – fund at $134,462,540** ($8.77m above FY17). Accidental opioid overdose deaths continue to climb in Massachusetts. Additional funding is needed to expand the Access to Recovery treatment program, to provide the Department of Public Health recommended one-step Naloxone/Narcan for treatment programs, and to increase the number of Recovery Centers which provide resources for recovery and relapse prevention. *Funding history: FY09: $89.81M; FY17: $125.69M; FY18 H1: $127.68M.*

● **State Public Health Laboratory & Communicable Disease Control (4516-1000) – fund at $12,520,173** (level with H1). The Department of Public Health Bureau of Infectious Disease & Laboratory Sciences protects the public from harm caused by more than 90 diseases, including Zika, Ebola, West Nile Virus, foodborne illnesses, rabies, and influenza; as well as lead poisoning and suspected bioterror agents. The Bureau analyzes, investigates, and responds to threats; enacts measures to prevent infection and reduce public harm from outbreaks; and supports local health departments to address communicable disease. *Funding history FY09: 17.29M; FY17: $12.28; FY18 H1: $12.52M.*

● **DPH Critical Operations and Essential Services (4510-0100) – fund at $17,852,074** (level with FY17). This line item supports critical DPH services and staff across the Department, including emergency preparedness, environmental health assessments, implementation and enforcement of regulations, reducing disparities in health care, and monitoring and inspections of nursing homes, food safety, and water quality. *Funding history: FY09: $24.53M; FY17: $17.85M; FY18 H1: $17.72M.*

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,

Rebekah Gewirtz, Executive Director          Maddie Ribble, Director of Public Policy

*All FY09 figures adjusted for inflation*