

# **HOUSE . . . . . No. 4503**

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## The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, February 26, 2020.

The committee on Ways and Means, to whom was referred the Bill relative to strengthening the local and regional public health system (House, No. 1935), reports recommending that the same ought to pass with an amendment substituting therefor the accompanying bill (House, No. 4503).

For the committee,

AARON MICHLEWITZ.

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

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**In the One Hundred and Ninety-First General Court  
(2019-2020)**  
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An Act relative to strengthening the local and regional public health system.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:*

1           SECTION 1. Chapter 111 of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after  
2 section 27C the following section:-

3           Section 27D. (a) The department shall establish a state action for public health excellence  
4 program to encourage boards of health, as defined in section 27B, and regional health districts,  
5 established pursuant to said section 27B, to adopt practices that will improve the efficiency and  
6 effectiveness of the delivery of local public health services. Local public health services shall  
7 include, but not be limited to, communicable disease control, chronic disease and injury  
8 prevention, environmental public health, maternal, child and family health and access to and  
9 linkage with clinical care. The program shall promote and provide resources for boards of health  
10 and regional health districts, including, but not limited to, the following:

11           (i) elevating the standards to improve the performance of boards of health and regional  
12 health districts;

13 (ii) increasing cross-jurisdictional sharing of public health services to strengthen service  
14 delivery capabilities of boards of health and regional health districts;

15 (iii) improving boards of health and regional health districts' planning and system  
16 accountability, including how data is reported and analyzed;

17 (iv) establishing workforce standards, including, but not limited to, education and training  
18 standards for board of health and regional health district officials and staff; and

19 (v) expanding access to professional development.

20 (b) Subject to appropriation, the department shall provide public health educational and  
21 training opportunities to board of health and regional health district officials and staff, no less  
22 than 4 times per year, in diverse geographic locations. The department shall provide such  
23 opportunities free of charge.

24 (c) Subject to appropriation, the department shall establish a state action for public health  
25 excellence grant program. Boards of health and regional health districts may apply for funding  
26 and technical assistance to support:

27 (i) the implementation of regional, inter-municipal collaboration and to increase  
28 efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of local public health services; or

29 (ii) planning and capacity building to facilitate regional collaboration or other strategies  
30 to implement regional collaboration.

31 Funds shall be awarded on a competitive basis and shall supplement and not replace  
32 existing state, local, private or federal funding to boards of health and regional health districts.  
33 To be eligible to receive funds an applicant shall submit an application in a manner determined

34 by the department, which shall include, but not be limited to, the following information: (i) a  
35 description of how the applicant, if awarded a grant, will increase the efficiency and  
36 effectiveness in the delivery of public health services across 2 or more municipalities; (ii)  
37 certification that the applicant, at the time of the application, meets workforce standards as  
38 determined by the department; (iii) certification that the applicant shall submit written  
39 documentation on the implementation of systems to increase efficiency in providing local public  
40 health services, including data, to the department at the end of the grant year, in a manner to be  
41 prescribed by the department; and (iv) a plan for the long-term sustainability of strengthening  
42 local public health services. The department may offer grantees an option to renew at the end of  
43 each grant year.

44 The department shall adopt rules, regulations or guidelines for the administration and  
45 enforcement of this section including, but not limited to, establishing applicant selection criteria,  
46 funding priorities, application forms and procedures, grant distribution and other requirements;  
47 provided, that not less than 33 per cent of the grants awarded shall go to cities and towns with a  
48 median household income below the average of the commonwealth.

49 (d) Annually, the department shall submit a report detailing the program's impact,  
50 including, but not limited to: (i) the number of board of health and regional health district  
51 officials and staff that meet workforce standards; (ii) the number of board of health and regional  
52 health district officials and staff that attended educational and training opportunities; (iii) the  
53 number of boards of health and regional health districts that are compliant with data reporting  
54 requirements; and (iv) the number of boards of health and regional health districts participating  
55 in regional collaboration. The report shall be provided to the clerks of the house of

56 representatives and the senate, the house and senate committees on ways and means and the joint  
57 committee on public health.

58 SECTION 2. (a) The department of public health shall, in consultation with the special  
59 commission on local and regional public health, as established in chapter 3 of the resolves of  
60 2016, develop a set of minimum standards for foundational public health services for the  
61 commonwealth. For the purposes of this section, foundational public health services shall  
62 include, but not be limited to, local public health services, as defined in subsection (a) of section  
63 27D of chapter 111 of the General Laws, and workforce standards necessary to protect the  
64 community's health and achieve equitable health outcomes. The department of public health and  
65 special commission on local and regional public health shall consider recommendations from the  
66 National Association of County and City Health Officials, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation,  
67 the Public Health Leadership Forum and other relevant experts.

68 (b) No later than March 1, 2022, the department shall submit a report to the clerks of the  
69 house of representatives and the senate, the house and senate committees on ways and means and  
70 the joint committee on public health. The report shall include an analysis of needs, opportunities,  
71 challenges, timeline and cost analysis for the implementation of foundational public health  
72 services.

73 SECTION 3. The special commission on local and regional public health, established in  
74 chapter 3 of the resolves of 2016 is hereby revived and continued.