

# METROPOLITAN MAYORS COALITION

*a local initiative facilitated by* METROPOLITAN AREA PLANNING COUNCIL

**ADAM CHAPDELAINÉ**  
*Town Manager of Arlington*

**KIM JANEY**  
*Mayor of Boston*

**CHARLES C. KOKOROS**  
*Mayor of Braintree*

**MEL KLECKNER**  
*Town Administrator of Brookline*

**LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE**  
*City Manager of Cambridge*

**THOMAS AMBROSINO**  
*City Manager of Chelsea*

**CARLO DeMARIA, JR.**  
*Mayor of Everett*

**GARY CHRISTENSON**  
*Mayor of Malden*

**BREANNA LUNGO-KOEHN**  
*Mayor of Medford*

**PAUL A. BRODEUR**  
*Mayor of Melrose, Vice Chair*

**RUTHANNE FULLER**  
*Mayor of Newton*

**THOMAS P. KOCH**  
*Mayor of Quincy*

**BRIAN ARRIGO**  
*Mayor of Revere*

**JOSEPH A. CURTATONE**  
*Mayor of Somerville, Chair*

**CHIEF TERENCE  
DELEHANTY**  
*Interim Town Manager of Winthrop*

November 13, 2021

The Honorable Ronald Mariano  
Speaker of the House  
State House, Room 356  
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Aaron Michlewitz  
Chair, House Committee on Ways and Means  
State House, Room 243  
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Daniel Hunt  
Chair, House Committee on Federal Stimulus  
and Census Oversight  
State House, Room 166  
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Karen Spilka  
President of the Senate  
State House, Room 332  
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Michael Rodrigues  
Chair, Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
State House, Room 212  
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Cindy Friedman  
Vice-Chair, Senate Committee on Ways and  
Means  
State House, Room 208  
Boston, MA 02133

## **RE: ARPA Bill – Local Public Health Investments and Reforms**

Dear Speaker Mariano, Senate President Spilka, Chair Michlewitz, Chair Rodrigues,  
Chair Hunt, and Vice-Chair Friedman:

On behalf of the Metro Mayors Coalition, thank you for your leadership to support the Commonwealth through the COVID-19 pandemic and economic recovery. We acknowledge and recognize the tremendous investments the House and Senate have dedicated to local and regional public health in their versions of the ARPA bill.

As the House and Senate begin to reconcile differences between the versions, the Metro Mayors Coalition respectfully request the Legislature to include the full \$250.9 million for local public health infrastructure, as well as include language adopted by the Senate, which is based on legislation filed in the House this session ([H.2329-SAPHE 2.0](#)) by Representatives Garlick and Kane.

The Metro Mayors Coalition is an organization of 15 cities and towns in the urban core of metropolitan Boston. The municipal officials comprising this group represent over 1.4 million residents in Arlington, Boston, Braintree, Brookline, Cambridge, Chelsea, Everett, Malden, Medford, Melrose, Newton, Quincy, Revere, Somerville, and Winthrop.

Convened by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), our Coalition has been coming together since 2001 to share information and solve common problems with an eye toward regional solutions. During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, we convened Mayors and Managers across the Commonwealth with public health experts to support each other and share best practices.

# METROPOLITAN MAYORS COALITION

*a local initiative facilitated by* METROPOLITAN AREA PLANNING COUNCIL

As municipal leaders, we were asked to be the front-line support for our residents, addressing everything from food insecurity and classroom safety to testing and eventually vaccine clinics. We could have not accomplished that without the devoted and committed staff at local and regional public health departments. Each of us knows first-hand and very personally the herculean work done by our respective public health departments and our incredible local health officials.

Despite the dedication of local health staff and volunteers, the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed the inadequacies and inequities of our municipally-based local public health system – and this will continue to put the entire state at risk. Unlike most states, Massachusetts does not have a county or regional system for public health. Massachusetts has more local health departments than any other state in the U.S., even though it ranks 13th in the nation for population size and 44th in land area.

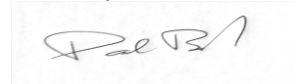
The Legislature passed the State Action for Public Health Excellence Act, or SAPHE Act, which was signed into law as [Chapter 72 of the Acts of 2020](#), incorporating many of the recommendations of the [Special Commission on Local and Regional Public Health](#). The Metro Mayors Coalition believes that SAPHE 2.0 builds on this strong foundation to provide additional supports and incentives for our critical public health infrastructure. We therefore urge its inclusion in the final ARPA spending bill. This policy reform would ensure minimum public health standards and workforce credentialing, incentivize cross-municipal and regional collaboration, create a uniform set of data standards and reporting, and train staff to make these reforms effective and meaningful. These are all common-sense changes that will better prepare Massachusetts' public health infrastructure for future health crises. These changes ensure that we will come out of this pandemic with a stronger public health system that works for all of our residents.

Both branches have dedicated significant funding to this effort, which demonstrates a commitment to allocate federal funds to address health disparities, enhance public health data systems, and support workforce development and training – and we are grateful for this. These funds, which can be used through the year 2026, will provide municipalities with the financial resources they need to conduct those critical policy reforms outlined in the SAPHE 2.0 language. Furthermore, the language indicates that such funds can be distributed through regular grants, competitive grants, technical assistance, as well as an appropriate formula devised by the Department of Public Health.

However, we are still grappling with a global pandemic. We must take this opportunity to bolster and strengthen the infrastructure and the workforce needed to combat this disease, to manage ongoing public health needs that existed before the pandemic, and to prepare for future health emergencies. Therefore, the Senate's allocation of \$250 million would more fully advance these critical efforts to modernize our local and regional public health systems. Therefore, we urge you to adopt both the Senate funding level as well as the SAPHE 2.0 language.

Thank you for your consideration of this letter, and we look forward to collaborating with you to building a resilient and modernized local public health system. If you have any questions, please contact Lizzi Weyant, MAPC's Director of Government Affairs, at 617-933-0703 or [eweyant@mapc.org](mailto:eweyant@mapc.org).

Sincerely,



Paul A. Brodeur  
Mayor, City of Melrose  
Vice Chair, Metropolitan Mayors Coalition