

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
OPTIONS FOR FINANCING HOSPITAL ISOLATION
FOR SOMEONE UNABLE TO PAY

Responsibility for payment

M.G.L. c. 111, section 116: “Reasonable expenses incurred by boards of health or by the commonwealth in making the provision required by law for persons infected with smallpox or other disease dangerous to the public health, other than tuberculosis, shall be paid by such persons, or, if such person is a minor, by his parents, *if he or they are able to pay*; otherwise, *by the town where he has a residence* upon the approval of the bill by the board of health of such town or by the department of public health of such town or by the department of public health when such person is determined to be a chronically nonresident [homeless] person.” [emphasis added]

Options to consider when the patient is unable to pay for hospitalization

- See if your city or town has any local emergency funds that could be tapped.
- Negotiate with the hospital where the patient is to go, to provide free care.
- With the advent of Health Care Reform, most hospitals in Massachusetts are enrollment sites for MassHealth, Commonwealth Care or other government subsidies. For information and resources on health care options, including coverage for individuals placed in isolation or quarantine, refer to Health Care for All at <http://www.hcfama.org/>.
- The Massachusetts Department of Public Health would be the payer of last resort, after attempts to enroll the patient in other government-subsidized plans have failed.