

# Blueprint for Public Health Excellence

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## DATA REPORTING AND ANALYSIS

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FEBRUARY 2020

*In June 2019, the Special Commission on Local and Regional Public Health (SCLRPH) released its final report, **Blueprint for Public Health Excellence: Recommendations for Improved Effectiveness and Efficiency of Local Public Health Protections**. The report documents the Commission's findings and makes recommendations for strengthening local public health services across the Commonwealth.*

*This fact sheet addresses the SCLRPH charge to make recommendations “to strengthen public health data reporting, gathering, and analysis, including any recommendations on mandatory reporting of local health authorities to the department.”*

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### SCLRPH FINDINGS

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- Because Massachusetts lacks a comprehensive system to collect local public health data, there is limited capacity to measure system performance and to use local data to plan public health improvements.
- The best practices for data collection and disease surveillance in Massachusetts and other states hold promise for improved data reporting and gathering capabilities.

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### WHAT DATA REPORTING AND ANALYSIS DO LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENTS DO?

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In the Commonwealth, local public health departments are responsible for at least three dozen different kinds of records, according to the Massachusetts Association of Health Boards. Some, but not all, of these are reported to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH).

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### WHY IS DATA REPORTING AND ANALYSIS IMPORTANT?

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The successful collection, analysis, and interpretation of data is often crucial to protecting the health and well-being of residents. In the 21st century, local public health departments increasingly rely on informatics—the acquisition, storage, and use of information—to better understand and serve specific population groups.

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## SCLRPH RECOMMENDATIONS

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Improve state and local public health departments' planning and system accountability by:

- Creating a standardized, integrated, and unified public health reporting system, and
- Strengthening the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, and local public health capacity to collect, analyze, and share data.

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## WHAT IS THE COMMONWEALTH DOING TO HELP LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS WITH DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS?

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MDPH has made a substantial investment in the development of the Massachusetts Virtual Epidemiologic Network (MAVEN) and the Massachusetts Immunization Information System (MIIS) to provide ready electronic tools to local public health for infectious disease surveillance and immunization tracking.

The Commission recommended the formation of the Local and Regional Public Health Advisory Committee ([www.mass.gov/service-details/local-and-regional-public-health-advisory-committee](http://www.mass.gov/service-details/local-and-regional-public-health-advisory-committee)) to monitor progress on implementation of its recommendations which includes a recommendation related to data reporting and analysis. The Advisory Committee was launched in January 2020.

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## WHAT ARE OTHERS DOING LOCALLY AND NATIONALLY?

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Colorado, Connecticut, Kansas, New Jersey, Ohio, and Oregon collect, analyze, and interpret data from local public health departments and then issue “report cards” that can be reviewed by state and local administrators, the state legislature, and consumers.

In general, more local public health practitioners are using data in a “broker” role, sharing it with other sectors, such as housing, education, business, and others, to address social determinants of health.

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## WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION?

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- Department of Public Health Office of Local and Regional Health Resources: [www.mass.gov/dph/olrh](http://www.mass.gov/dph/olrh)
- Massachusetts Virtual Epidemiologic Network (MAVEN): <http://sites.bu.edu/masslocalinstitute/2011/06/08/massachusetts-virtual-epidemiologic-network-maven/>
- Massachusetts Immunization Information System (MIIS): [www.mass.gov/service-details/massachusetts-immunization-information-system-miis](http://www.mass.gov/service-details/massachusetts-immunization-information-system-miis)

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The Commission's report, **Blueprint for Public Health Excellence: Recommendations for Improved Effectiveness and Efficiency of Local Public Health Protections**, is available on the Office of Local and Regional Health web site: [www.mass.gov/dph/olrh](http://www.mass.gov/dph/olrh).

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