



The Health Equity Compact

Taking Bold Action Towards Health Equity

Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Persons with Disabilities
December 13, 2023

About the Compact

Who We Are

The Health Equity Compact (the “Compact”) is a growing group of **over 80 leaders of color** who aim to advance health equity together in Massachusetts.

Compact members are high-level executives and experts from a diverse set of health, business, labor, and philanthropic organizations, including hospitals, health centers, payers, academic institutions, and public health. We bring our **lived experience**, **expertise**, and **urgency** to our work to advance health equity.

Purpose

Our vision is the elimination of systemic barriers and creation of new structures and processes that will lead to equitable healthcare and health outcomes for all in Massachusetts.

Our mission is to realize bold statewide policy and institutional practice changes that center racial justice and health equity.



1199SEIU • United Healthcare Workers East • Associated Industries of Massachusetts • Baystate Health • Beth Israel Lahey Health • Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts • Boston Children's Hospital • The Boston Foundation • Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program • Boston Medical Center • Boston Public Health Commission • Boston University School of Public Health • Cambridge Health Alliance • CareQuest Institute for Oral Health • Caring Health Center • Carney Hospital • Codman Square Health Center • The Commonwealth Fund • Commonwealth Racial Equity and Social Justice Fund • Dana-Farber Cancer Institute • The Dimock Center • East Boston Neighborhood Health Center • Edward M. Kennedy Community Health Center • eMed • The Equitist • Family Health Center of Worcester • FXB Center for Health and Human Rights



**Leaders of
Color
Advancing
Health Equity
Together**

Guardian Healthcare • Harvard Medical School • Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health • The Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts • The Institute for Healthcare Improvement • Latino Equity Fund • Lawrence General Hospital • Lowell Community Health Center • Lynn Community Health Center • Mass General Brigham • Massachusetts Behavioral Health Partnership • Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers • Massachusetts Life Sciences Center • Mattapan Community Health Center • Outer Cape Health Services • The Partnership • Point32Health • Reach Out and Read • Rosenfeld & Rafik, P.C. • Sánchez Strategies • Southeast Asian Coalition of Central Massachusetts • Springfield Health and Human Services • Stavros Center For Independent Living • Suffolk Law University • Takeda • Tufts Medicine • UMass • UniCare • Whittier Street Health Center • Worcester Health and Human Services

The Time Is Now:

The \$5.9 Billion Case for Massachusetts Health Equity Reform

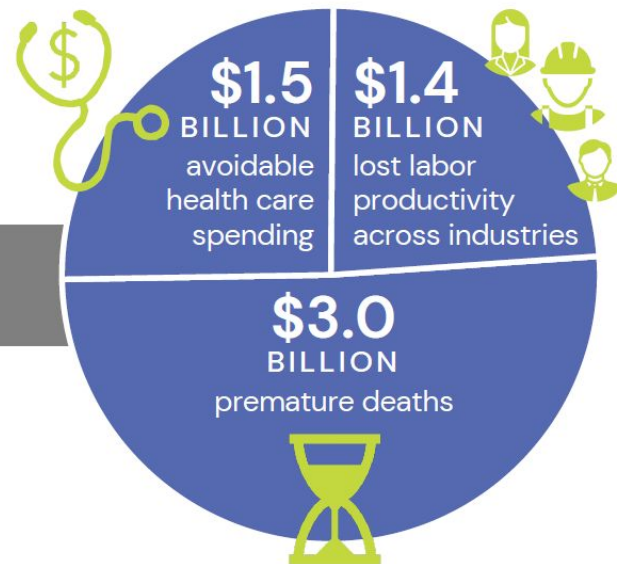
JUNE 2023

\$5.9
BILLION

The annual economic burden of health inequities¹ experienced by populations of color in Massachusetts.²

This impacts individuals, families, and public and private stakeholders.

EACH YEAR, IT COSTS THE MASSACHUSETTS ECONOMY:



\$11.2
BILLION

The annual economic burden of health inequities experienced by populations of color in Massachusetts will almost double by 2050.



THE TIME TO ACT TO ADDRESS HEALTH INEQUITIES IS NOW.

Policy Priorities

Our Policy Priorities

The Compact is working to advance state policy change in six priority areas:

1. Governance
2. Measurement and Accountability
3. Workforce
4. Healthcare Payment and Delivery Reform
5. Coverage and Access
6. Social Determinants of Health

An Act to Advance Health Equity

**H. 1250
S.799**

Lead Sponsors:
Sen. Pavel Payano
Sen. Liz Miranda
Rep. Bud Williams
Rep. Judith Garcia

Hearing for An Act to Advance Health Equity



On September 20, 2023, Health Equity Compact members and advocates gathered to testify before the Joint Committee on Health Care Financing to urge them to report on the bill favorably.



An Act to Advance Health Equity

This legislation aims to advance systemic policy changes that will support the fair and just opportunity for all residents of the Commonwealth to live healthy lives. It broadens and strengthens the state's foundation to advance health equity in the following ways:

Prioritize Equity
in State
Government

Standardize and
Report on Data to
Advance Health Equity

Improve
Access and
Quality of Care

Prioritize Equity in State Government

- Create a new cabinet-level **Executive Office of Equity**, to be led by a Secretary of Equity
- **Diversify gender and racial and ethnic composition** within leadership of key state agencies, boards, and commissions
- **Invest in** community-defined and led efforts to build **healthier communities** by addressing the root causes of inequities
 - *Health Equity Zone Advisory Board member criteria includes **diversity of ability***

Standardize and Report on Data to Advance Health Equity

- Require the use of **standardized health equity data metrics** across provider and payer organizations and new accountability mechanisms for reporting the data
 - Includes **disability as a socio-demographic factor** when disaggregating data to track population level outcomes
- Direct state agencies to **report publicly on data** to identify disparities and track progress on healthcare equity and social drivers of health in the Commonwealth

Improve Access & Quality of Care

- Provide **full MassHealth coverage** for all people who are otherwise eligible, regardless of immigration status, including young people
- Address increasing cost burden of certain **medications for chronic conditions** that disproportionately affect communities of color and low-income communities
- Require **reimbursement parity for telehealth services** for primary care and chronic disease management
- Require provider organizations to **meet or exceed national standards** for culturally and linguistically appropriate services and multicultural health care
- Authorize a **career ladder program for diverse workers** who reflect the communities they serve in safety net hospitals and other community providers
 - ***Ability diversity** in the health care workforce must inform CHIA's understanding of health care access*
 - *Minimum licensing standards for continuing education include skills to address how **ableism manifests as health inequities***

Additional Provisions related to disability

- **Definition of health equity** includes disability
- Equity impact analysis of housing policy includes **accessibility as a dimension of analysis**
- Equity impact analysis of health care access includes **home and community based services**
- Clarifies that priorities related to disabilities are included in the **definition of health equity**

The HEC has worked closely with key stakeholders to specifically include disability and gender within the language. A redline was submitted to the Health Care Financing Joint Committee to include specificity around data collection, assessing discrimination and standardizing regulations

Growing Momentum



Northeast Community Forum, May 3

- Holding **health equity community engagement forums** to raise support in communities across Massachusetts and inform our work
- Commissioned a health equity **public opinion poll** with MassINC
- Hosted the first **Health Equity Trends Summit** in June
- Organized Compact members and advocates to testify in support of an Act to Advance Health Equity before the Joint Committee on Healthcare Financing

Statewide Health Equity Poll: Key Findings

- 96% agree that everyone should have the opportunity to live a long, healthy life, regardless of their income, education or race
- 80% agree that some groups face more obstacles to getting healthcare
- 83% believe that state policymakers should give a fair or great deal of attention to improving health equity in the next few years
- Large majorities support a range of potential policy priorities, with Black and Latino residents calling a wider range of potential policy priorities “very important”

Potential policies for Massachusetts state leaders to pursue	% very / somewhat important
Making medications for conditions like asthma, heart disease, and diabetes more affordable	94%
Investing in local efforts to build healthier, stronger communities	90%
Making sure healthcare services are respectful and responsive to diverse cultural backgrounds of patients	89%
Maintaining access to telehealth services	85%
Promoting programs that recruit, train, and support a diverse healthcare workforce	85%
Ensuring all our community members, regardless of immigration status, have access to MassHealth or Medicaid, if otherwise eligible	80%
Staffing health-related state agencies with diverse leaders	79%

Health Equity Trends Summit 2023

On June 13, 2023, the Health Equity Compact hosted the first Health Equity Trends Summit at UMass Boston. **Over 700 people** and **36 speakers and panelists** from **health systems**, the **business sector**, and **state government** explored ways to bring breakthrough change to advance health equity in Massachusetts.



Closing

- Take action – make your voice heard! You can still **submit written testimony** in support of *An Act to Advance Health Equity*
- Do you see **alignment** between the work of your individual organization and our policy priorities?
- Are there ways the Compact can **partner** with the Commission and/or your organization?
- Questions for us?

Thank you!

Contact

Alicia DelVento
aliciadelvento@gmail.com

healthequitycompact.org