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To "All 2024 Members" <members@maphn.org>
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Subject News This Week

Attachments State-Health-Officials-Announce-Additional-Human-Cases-of-West-Nile-Virus-in-Massachusetts-_-Mass.gov.pdf; Governor-Healey-Announces-Immediate-Steps-to-Ensure-Vaccine-Availability-in-Massachusetts-Amid-Trump-RFK-Rollbacks-_-Mass.gov.pdf; Annual-MAPHN-Report.pdf; Sept-EBlast.pdf; Hearing-Details-Joint-Committee-on-Public-Health.pdf; Standing-Order-for-Dispensing-and-Administration-of-COVID.docx

COVID Vaccinations in MA: Changes implemented by Massachusetts officials made it possible to get a COVID vaccine at pharmacies throughout the state, but the tangled web of state and federal policies continues to make parts of the process complicated. As of Friday, CVS said patients could walk into its Massachusetts pharmacies to request a dose under recent state-level changes. However, the company said its online scheduling system cannot accommodate state-specific policies and can still only book appointments based on federal recommendations. Walgreens pharmacies were also going to begin offering COVID vaccinations under the Massachusetts revisions. Until now, pharmacies in Massachusetts couldn't give out the shots because the feds hadn't issued recommendations for who should get them. So now the state has issued its own recommendations. "The demand is really high," said Xiaoyan Qin, a pharmacist who works in Newton. "Yesterday itself we already administered 100 shots in our Newton Centre location and almost 50 shots at our other three locations at Union Pharmacy." Under the state's order, anyone six months or older can get a COVID shot. People aged 5 or older can get it from a doctor or pharmacist, while younger children must get it through a pediatrician. The state is also requiring insurance companies to cover the shots. **On September 3rd, the Department of Public Health has recently issued a standing order allowing for all qualified pharmacy personnel at Massachusetts pharmacies to dispense and administer COVID-19 vaccine in Massachusetts to all eligible persons. See attached signed model standing orders for dispensing and administration!**

Massachusetts changes vaccine access rules as RFK Jr. faces Senate scrutiny: Healey accuses the Trump administration of health policy failures. While U.S. Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. faced a contentious congressional hearing ([you can watch the full 3 hour recording here](#)) about turmoil at the nation's health agencies, Massachusetts leaders were making changes they said would improve vaccine availability regardless of federal policies. CVS said it was working to make COVID-19 vaccines "available as soon as possible" throughout Massachusetts as a result of the regulatory changes announced Thursday. Walgreens is also expected to make the shots available. Gov. Maura Healey vowed not to let President Donald Trump or RFK Jr. "get between patients and their doctors." "It's a pretty sad statement that we can no longer trust the federal government on this but, sadly, that's where we're at," Gov. Maura Healey said. Former CDC director Dr. Rochelle Walensky is warning that the agency's current path under the leadership of Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. is dangerous for the public health of the nation. "The shortcomings of CDC, both real and fictional, during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, are being used as a pretext to dismantle both the agency and the programs that ensure Americans have access to lifesaving vaccines," Walensky said. "HHS leadership is inching towards a complete vaccine takedown, incrementally chiseling away at our previously trusted systems, leaving behind a shaky, fragmented vaccine facade that is increasingly obscure and untenable and that has already limited vaccine access." Read the attached Press Release. Pennsylvania, Colorado and Massachusetts became the latest states to break with the CDC's vaccine recommendations this week, separately announcing their own policies regarding COVID-19 vaccinations.

Robert F. Kennedy Jr. reshapes CDC vaccine advisory panel with new appointees: U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. is preparing to appoint as many as seven new members to an influential vaccine advisory panel to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, according to a former federal official who said they had seen a list of names under consideration. The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, or ACIP, is tasked with reviewing the latest science on vaccines and then making recommendations to the CDC on how they should be used. The CDC director isn't bound by the panel's recommendations but usually accepts them. By law, insurance plans must cover vaccines with no cost-sharing if ACIP recommends them, and many states do not allow certain health care providers to give updated COVID-19 shots or other vaccines unless or until ACIP recommends them. In June, Kennedy abruptly removed all 17 sitting members of the panel, saying it was "plagued with persistent conflicts of interest." He provided no evidence to back up that claim, and a recent review by researchers at the University of Southern California found that conflicts of interest on ACIP had been at historic lows for years. Kennedy rapidly replaced the ACIP members with eight of his own candidates, although one

withdrew during the vetting process because of financial conflicts of interest. Several of the new members have made unproven claims about vaccines, including one who said COVID shots are causing “unprecedented levels of death and harm in young people.”

Two more human cases of West Nile virus have been confirmed in Massachusetts, bringing the total number for 2025 to four, the Department of Public Health said. The two latest cases involve a man in his 40s who was likely exposed to the virus in Hampden County and a man in his 80s with exposure in Middlesex County. As a result, risk levels for West Nile virus have been elevated to high in Ashland, Framingham, Marlborough, Natick, Sherborn, Southborough, Sudbury and Wayland. The risk for West Nile virus is now high in 28 municipalities in Suffolk, Middlesex, Essex and Worcester counties and moderate in 175 cities and towns in Barnstable, Berkshire, Bristol, Essex, Franklin, Hampden, Hampshire, Middlesex, Norfolk, Plymouth, Suffolk and Worcester counties. In addition to West Nile virus, Eastern equine encephalitis has also been detected in mosquitoes in Massachusetts this year. There have been 21 EEE-positive mosquito samples and no human or animal cases so far this year. Read the full attached Press Release.

Public Health Data Restored: Last week’s lawsuit settlement, DHHS agreed to restore public health data to thousands of federal webpages, including those of NIH, CDC, and FDA. These data were removed following the January 2025 Executive Orders and related directives. The deleted content included LGBTQ health, gender and reproductive issues, clinical trials, vaccine guidance, and HIV/AIDS research. Such data are critical for researchers and policymakers who rely on them to develop effective interventions and guide future health initiatives. This ruling is a victory for data access by ensuring legal protection against the suppression of public health data. Future efforts will need to safeguard the integrity, completeness, and continued availability of these data.

OLRH Monthly Webinar: This is a reminder that the Local Public Health Monthly Webinar will be held this **Tuesday, Sept. 9 at 3 p.m.** on [Zoom](#). The agenda, which is subject to change, will be: Vaccine updates, SAPHE 2.0 update reporting, [Office of Preparedness and Emergency Management](#) and Other updates. Don't forget to register to attend and/or provide testimony at the upcoming [SAPHE 2.0 public hearings](#).

The Public Health Museum is offering a series of one-hour Monday evening presentations (7 PM, September–November) designed as continued education for participants of this year’s Exploring Public Health: Careers, Colleges and Connections program — but open to all who are interested! Topics include healthcare for the homeless, climate change, refugee health, emerging infections, and more - presented by our summer session experts. Date and time of sessions: Sep 8, 2025 07:00 PM, Sep 29, 2025 07:00 PM, Oct 27, 2025 07:00 PM and Nov 10, 2025 07:00 PM. [Click here to register for any or all of the sessions!](#) The Museum is also hosting a Movie Night: Join the Public Health Museum in an evening showing of Stonegate. Meet the cast and crew, and tour the museum before the screening! [Click here to get your tickets!](#) To see the full Museum Newsletter, see attached!

MAPHN Annual Report: Please read the annual report of our organization! Attached for your convenience. [Here is the link for it as well!](#)

As was reported in August, ANHE is supporting the work of Clean Water Action Massachusetts on a bill they are working on: "An Act relative to toxic free kids" (now [HB 4357](#)). There are quite a few agenda items for the Joint Commission for Public Health this week (see attached) which includes instructions on how you can submit testimony, or sign in to attend the hearing(s).

COCA Call This Week: Clinician Outreach and Communication Activity (COCA) Call, presenters will discuss the current epidemiology of measles in the United States and address the most common questions from clinicians about preventing, identifying, and testing for measles. Presenters will also summarize measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccination recommendations and considerations. Date: Thursday, September 11, 2025 Time: 2:00 PM – 3:00 PM ET. [Here is the link to join the Webinar.](#)

Register today for the 30th Annual MAIP Pediatric Immunization Skills Building Conference November 5th, 2025 from 8:00am - 4:00 pm. Registration is open now! This full-day, pediatric conference will provide up-to-date information on the field of pediatric immunization with an emphasis on current immunization recommendations and general immunization updates. [Click here to register.](#)

Stand Down With MAPHN registration for volunteers is seeking medical and non-medical volunteers for our Foot Care Tent. The event is on Friday September 19th 7-2 (set up at 7, demobilize usually after lunch around 1). If you can help even a half day... it would be deeply appreciated! [Learn more and register here!](#)

Have a great week!

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