

PRESS RELEASE

# Governor Healey Announces Immediate Steps to Ensure Vaccine Availability in Massachusetts Amid Trump, RFK Rollbacks

Healey Administration takes first-of-its-kind action to guarantee insurance coverage of vaccines recommended by the state

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Governor Maura Healey and Lt. Governor Kim Driscoll  
Department of Public Health  
Executive Office of Health and Human Services

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**BOSTON** — Governor Maura Healey today announced a series of immediate measures to ensure that vaccines remain available to Massachusetts residents of all ages, while President Donald Trump and Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. restrict access to vaccines and make cuts to public health across the country.

“Massachusetts has the best health care in the world,” said **Governor Healey**. “We won’t let Donald Trump and Robert Kennedy get between patients and their doctors. When the federal government fails to protect public health, Massachusetts will step up. The actions we are announcing today will make sure people can continue to get the vaccines they need and want in Massachusetts.”

Today, the Governor announced three steps to protect vaccine access in Massachusetts.

First, at Governor Healey's direction, the Division of Insurance (DOI) and Department of Public Health (DPH) issued a [bulletin](/doc/coverage-for-vaccines-bulletin/download) that requires insurance carriers in Massachusetts to continue to cover vaccines recommended by DPH and not rely solely on CDC recommendations. Massachusetts is the first state in the nation to guarantee insurance coverage of vaccines recommended by the state. Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts and the Massachusetts Association of Health Plans all support this action. This will ensure that Massachusetts residents can afford the vaccines they need and want to keep themselves and others healthy, even if the federal government issues narrower recommendations. These include respiratory virus vaccines, like COVID, flu and RSV, and routine vaccines for children, like measles, chickenpox, and Hepatitis B. This action follows [legislation](/news/governor-healey-files-245-billion-supplemental-budget-to-close-fiscal-year-2025) filed by Governor Healey last month that would give DPH authority to set independent standards for vaccine purchasing and recommendations.

"We are so fortunate to live in Massachusetts where we prioritize science and support patients," said **Secretary of Health and Human Services Kiame Mahaniah, MD, MBA**. "With Governor Healey's leadership and collaboration between DPH and DOI, those who want to get vaccinated will be able to without added cost or confusion because of decisions made at the federal level."

"As an infectious disease physician, I have seen the extraordinary impact vaccines have had in saving lives and preventing serious illness. Limiting access to vaccines is not just shortsighted – it is reckless," said **Public Health Commissioner Robbie Goldstein, MD, PhD**. "Massachusetts will not allow ideology to override evidence. We must continue to be guided by science and data. And we must do what is right, even when it is hard, because protecting public health is not optional, it is a responsibility – a promise – we make to every resident of our Commonwealth. Today we are keeping that promise."

"Today's action ensures that everyone who should get a vaccine will get one and their insurance will cover it," said **Insurance Commissioner Michael Caljouw**. "Our collective commitment – state government working with our health insurance companies – is important as we enter the fall season."

Second, Governor Healey's administration has also taken steps to ensure that Massachusetts residents who want to receive the COVID vaccine can do so at pharmacies. Last week, it was reported that CVS and Walgreens could not offer the COVID vaccine in multiple states, including Massachusetts, because the federal government was no longer recommending it for adults. In response, DPH Commissioner Dr. Robbie Goldstein issued a [standing order](/news/standing-order-for-dispensing-and-administration-of-covid-19-vaccine-2025-2026) to allow pharmacies

to continue to provide COVID vaccines to Massachusetts residents aged five and older. Children under five can receive the vaccine through their pediatrician. Additionally, this morning, [DPH updated its vaccine administration policy](/doc/2023-02-vaccine-administration-pdf/download) to permit the DPH Commissioner to determine which routine vaccines can be administered by pharmacists in Massachusetts, instead of limiting them only to vaccines recommended by the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). As a result of these actions, CVS and Walgreens are working to make COVID vaccine appointments available in Massachusetts as soon as possible.

Third, under Governor Healey's leadership, Massachusetts is also leading efforts to create a public health collaboration with states in New England and across the Northeast committed to safeguarding public health as the federal government backs away from its responsibilities. This multi-state collaborative is focused on developing evidence-based recommendations on vaccinations, disease surveillance, emergency preparedness and supporting state public health labs.

### **Statements of Support:**

#### **House Speaker Ronald J. Mariano (D-Quincy):**

"The Commonwealth has a long history of serving as a national leader in health care, especially during moments of federal mismanagement, and this action from Governor Healey is the latest example of that leadership. The House remains committed to ensuring that Massachusetts residents are able to make decisions about their own health care in consultation with their doctor, and without restrictions that are driven by debunked conspiracy theories."

#### **Senate President Karen E. Spilka (D-Ashland):**

"Vaccines save lives and protect families. Period. The Healey Administration's actions will help ensure federal drama does not affect our access to vaccines that are essential to public health. In Massachusetts, we believe healthcare decisions should be made by you and your provider. If you want a vaccine, you should be able to get one easily. These are the right steps to take, and I applaud Governor Healey and Commissioners Goldstein and Caljouw for taking them."

#### **Lora Pellegrini, President and CEO, Massachusetts Association of Health Plans:**

"The Massachusetts Association of Health Plans (MAHP) strongly supports Governor Maura Healey's decisive actions to ensure Massachusetts residents continue to have access to critical preventive vaccines, despite destabilizing federal policy changes that threaten public health. As Massachusetts takes steps to empower the Department of Public Health to set independent vaccine standards, MAHP member plans remain steadfast in our commitment to ensuring coverage of evidence-based

care. Protecting access to vaccines is central to reducing preventable illness, addressing health disparities, and maintaining the Commonwealth's reputation for leading with science and equity. MAHP and our member plans stand ready to work with the Healey Administration, providers, and public health leaders to ensure that every Massachusetts resident has access to the immunizations they need to stay healthy."

**Dr. Sandhya Rao, Chief Medical Officer, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts:**

"We strongly support vaccine access and view it as a critical part of public health and preventive care. We're proud to work with the Healey administration as part of the Mass. Vaccine Purchasing Advisory Council, and applaud the state's efforts to protect the health of our communities."

**Carlene Pavlos, Executive Director, Massachusetts Public Health Alliance:**

"The Massachusetts Public Health Alliance is grateful that the commissioner of public health, the governor, and the legislature are taking seriously their responsibility to protect and promote the health and safety of people in Massachusetts. Existing and anticipated federal changes are undermining vaccine access nationwide and posing a genuine threat to the health of Massachusetts residents. The Healey-Driscoll administration's decision to stand up for science-based public health today will help to mitigate these threats and should serve as a model for other states and regions of the country."

**Steve Walsh, President and CEO, Massachusetts Health & Hospital Association:**

"Vaccines are a fundamental component of public health, and we are grateful that the Healey-Driscoll Administration is taking the necessary steps to ensure they are available to a wide range of Massachusetts residents. This approach will not only prevent sickness and save lives; it will reduce the strains on our hospitals and their dedicated caregivers."

**Amy Rosenthal, Executive Director, Health Care for All:**

"Health Care for All is grateful to the Healey Administration and the insurance plans in Massachusetts, who have worked to ensure all individuals in the state can obtain science-backed, life-saving vaccines. Today's action makes certain that no one will be denied access to vaccinations due to cost. Health Care for All is proud to call Massachusetts home, a state that is leading the nation in protecting public health."

**Patrick Gilligan, CEO, Point32Health:**

"We applaud Governor Healey's actions to ensure residents of Massachusetts have access to vaccinations including the Flu and COVID-19 vaccines. These actions are critical to maintain the

public health of the Commonwealth as well as the health and wellness of our members."

**Elissa Sherman, President, LeadingAge Massachusetts:**

"LeadingAge Massachusetts commends the Healey-Driscoll Administration for taking decisive action to protect vulnerable populations by ensuring access to COVID-19 vaccines for Massachusetts residents. Aging services providers have worked diligently over the years to educate and encourage their workforce to protect themselves and the older adults they serve through vaccination. By sustaining access to these essential vaccines, the Administration is reinforcing a critical public health measure that safeguards vulnerable populations and strengthens the aging services sector."

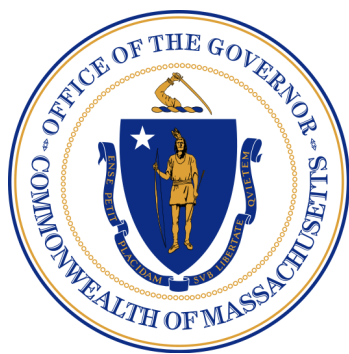
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## Media Contact

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### **Governor Maura Healey and Lt. Governor Kim Driscoll**

Since taking office, Governor Healey and Lieutenant Governor Driscoll's top priority has been building a Massachusetts that's affordable, competitive, and equitable – for every family, worker, and business.



## Department of Public Health

DPH keeps people healthy and communities strong.

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Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Executive Office of Health and  
Human Services

## Executive Office of Health and Human Services

The Executive Office of Health and Human Services is comprised of 11 agencies and the MassHealth program. EOHHS seeks to promote the health, resilience, and independence of the nearly one in every three residents of the Commonwealth we serve. Our public health programs touch every community in the Commonwealth.

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