



Legislative Update

Volume 1, Issue 1

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Special points of interest:

- New Speed Limits
- New Intergovernmental Relations (IGR)
- New Legislative Session
- New Report on Addiction

Slow Down, BPHC Testifies in Favor of Lower Speed Limits

Recently, BPHC Medical Director Dr. Huy Nguyen joined by Paramedic James Salvia testified at a Boston City Council Hearing in favor of Boston lowering its speed limits from 30 MPH to 25 MPH in residential and business areas and from 25 MPH to 20 MPH in school zones.

Earlier this year Boston City Councilors voted in favor of lowering speed limits and the State Legislature passed a bill signed into law which enabled municipalities to make such changes. The November hearing was another step on the way to the final vote and passage of Boston's new speed limits which will go into effect on January 19, 2017.

Dr. Nguyen's testimony highlighted two reasons the lower speed limits are a public health concern. First it lowers the likelihood of a fatal accident for pedestrians and cyclist. Both are 74% more likely to die when hit by a car traveling the current speed 30 MPH speed limit than the new 25 MPH according to AAA. Second, driving at the lower speed also can reduce the number of accidents. In 2014 EMS cared for 555 pedestrians and 724 cyclists. The lower speed limit gives drivers a better field of vision while pedestrians and cyclists have more time to see and react to vehicles.



Dr. Huy Nguyen, BPHC Medical Director (2nd from the right) testifying in support of lowering the speed limit. Paramedic James Salvia (far right) also testified.

Hello from Intergovernmental Relations

Hello,

IRG is happy to reintroduce the monthly newsletter to update you on our work as we prepare for a new year of important policy work. We are excited to continue the tradition of promoting a strong, effective advocacy voice and presence for public health policy at all levels of government, and to accom-

plish BPHC strategies for good health and health equity through laws and regulations. In this time of change, the continued need for policy changes that benefit the health of our residents, especially the most vulnerable, is that much more crucial.

If you haven't had an opportunity to meet with us, please feel free reach out. If

you have a key public health issue or idea for something IGR can help with, let us know!

Happy Holiday Season and we will see you in 2017!

Heather Gasper, Director
Katie Donovan, Assistant
Director



President Elect Trump's Nominees

President Elect Donald Trump is busy selecting his cabinet nominees. Here are some who will have impact on BPHC's work.

Secretary Health and Human Services (HHS):

Tom Price, orthopedic surgeon and Republican Representative from Georgia. Dr. Price is known for his opposition to the Affordable Care Act (ACA) also known as Obamacare. Since 2009

Rep. Price has filed legislation with detailed alternatives to ACA.

Administrator Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS):

Seema Verma, health care consultant who worked with Indiana Gov. Mike Pence (VP Elect) on expansion of Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act. Her work on Indiana's and other

state plans include monthly payments from recipients and work requirements.

Secretary Housing and Urban Development (HUD):

Ben Carson, former Republican presidential candidate and retired neurosurgeon. This will be Dr. Carson's first political position if approved.

***Kentucky,
Tennessee,
New York and
Ohio have seen
substantial
impact with
similar
mandates.***

One Point of Opioid Addiction Prevention Improves by 478%

The Massachusetts Awareness Prevention Tool (MassPAT) has seen a substantial rise in use since Oct. 15th of this year when a new law requiring searches before prescribing Schedule II and Schedule III narcotics went into effect. MassPAT provides a patient's prescription history for one year in Mass and

more than 20 other states. The ultimate goal is to decrease overdoses and addiction. Data from The Surgeon Generals Report (see next page) of states which have implemented similar requirements show increases in searches, decreases in prescriptions and decreases in "doctor shopping." Searches surged from

5,942 per weekday to 28,423. Data on prescriptions and "doctor shopping" impact are to be seen.

BPHC Signs Federal Nutritional Program Letter

BPHC has signed on the Massachusetts based Food SNAP Coalition letter to the state's federal delegation regarding federal nutritional programs. In anticipation of potential changes to programs under the new Trump Administration, the letter thanks the representatives and senators for their "unwavering support of federal nutrition programs" while urging

"resolve to protect and defend these programs against eligibility restrictions and benefits cuts." 9.7% of Massachusetts' citizens suffer from food insecurity. Food programs including SNAP, school breakfast and lunch, Head Start, WIC, and TEFAP serve 1 in 9 MA residents. Research shows that every \$1 spent on feeding people experiencing hunger and food insecurity

saves almost \$50 in Medicaid costs¹.

Potential cuts to federally-funded programs can have great negative impact on the health of our individuals and ultimately cost the government more.

¹ Source: Alliance to End Hunger





**Intergovernmental
Relations**

Heather Gasper, Director
617-534-2288
HGasper@BPHC.org

Katie Donovan, Asst. Director
617-534-7781
CDonovan@BPHC.org

January 3, 2017 Starts New State Legislative Session

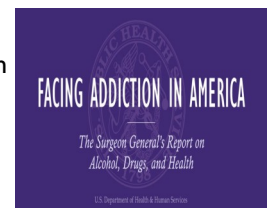


On January 3, 2017, 140 representatives and 60 senators will be sworn in at the State House. The Boston Delegation consists of 17 Representatives and 6 Senators. All but one are incumbents who will continue their work on behalf of the citizens of Boston and beyond. The one new delegate is Rep.-Elect Chynah Tyler who replaces the retiring Rep. Gloria Fox.

January 20, 2017 is the deadline for legislators to file bills for the two-year session. The typical 5,000 to 6,000 bills are

expected to be filed at the beginning of this session. The House and Senate will have till July 31, 2018 to pass the bills in formal session or until December 31, 2018 to pass the bills in informal session. Getting any bill to law can be challenging but with a lot of effort and determined advocacy, legislative change is possible. Next month's issue will begin our look at the City of Boston's and BPHC's priority bills, coalitions who we engage with to pass these and other bills, and let you know how you can get involved if you wish.

Facing Addiction in America, a first of its kind report from the Surgeon General, Vivek H Murthy, details how addiction impacts individuals, families, the economy, and society as a whole. Prevention and treatment of addiction is one of BPHC's main priorities, making this landmark report a must read.



“A public health-based approach to improve the health, safety, and well-being of the entire population.”

The mission of the IGR office is to promote a strong effective advocacy voice and presence for public health policy at all levels of government, and to accomplish BPHC strategies for good health and health equity through laws and regulations. We believe that staff, clients, and community members should have the skills and opportunities to participate meaningfully in the policymaking process and work for policy changes that benefit the health of residents, especially the most vulnerable.

WHAT WE DO

- Track information on health policy and major priority issues
 - Advocate to improve public health through laws, regulations and public budgets at the local, state and federal level
 - Support programs to develop policy priorities and advocate for them
- Provide training and support for staff, clients/constituents, and community partners to develop advocacy skills to speak up for issues they care about
- Coordinate Voting for Health, to educate and mobilize voters to support neighborhood health

PLEASE NOTE:

All advocacy opportunities we present are **STRICTLY VOLUNTARY.**