



**Office of
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Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

For Immediate Release

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Representative Kane’s bill promoting regional collaboration on public health services passes the House unanimously

BOSTON – State Representative Hannah Kane, R-Shrewsbury is supporting legislation to improve the delivery of public health services through enhanced collaboration between local boards of health and regional health districts.

House Bill 4503, *An Act relative to strengthening the local and regional public health system*, would make additional training, professional development, and financial resources available to ensure that public health services are delivered more efficiently and effectively across Massachusetts. The bill was engrossed by the House of Representatives on a vote of 148-0 on February 26.

Representative Kane is a lead sponsor of H4503 along with colleague Representative Denise Garlick, D-Needham. Representative Kane has served as a member of the Special Commission on Local and Regional Public Health since its creation in 2016. Her hometown of Shrewsbury belongs to a regionalized public health model partnership with the City of Worcester and other neighboring towns implemented several years ago. Representative Kane spoke on the house floor yesterday afternoon before the vote in the House.

“This legislation will work toward ensuring each resident of the Commonwealth has access to the public health services they need to live a healthy life, regardless of their zip code or the size of their community. H4503 will significantly strengthen our local and regional health systems by tackling many of the financial and operational burdens municipalities face. I am proud to have filed this bill with my colleague Representative Garlick and thank Minority Leader Jones for appointing me as his Designee on the Special Commission where our unanimous report recommendations served as the basis for this legislation. I am grateful to the Commission members and the advocacy organizations for helping advance this bill,” remarked Representative Kane.

Under the bill, a new State Action for Public Health Excellence Program will be established within the Department of Public Health (DPH) to enhance the delivery of public health services at the local and regional levels. The bill specifies that these services will include, but not be limited to, communicable disease control; chronic disease and injury prevention; environmental public health; maternal, child and family health; and access to and linkage with clinical care.

The bill also creates a competitive grant program, known as the State Action for Public Health Excellence Grant Program, to supplement existing state, local, private and federal funding for local boards of health and regional health districts. The grants will be used to support more regional, inter-municipal collaboration.

In addition, the bill requires DPH to provide employees of boards of health and regional health districts with access to public health educational training opportunities, free of charge, at least four times a year. DPH will also work in consultation with the Special Commission on Local and Regional Public Health to develop a set of minimum standards for foundational public health services for the Commonwealth, including local public health services and workforce standards.

House Bill 4503 now heads to the Senate for further consideration.

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