



Massachusetts
PROVINCETOWN

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**Provincetown Board of Health Calls on Governor Baker to
Delay Further Re-Opening Plans**

Low-wage workers, Black, Latinx & Seniors need better safety protections first

(Provincetown, Mass.) — As Governor Baker is poised to announce further re-opening plans for the Commonwealth, the Provincetown Board of Health unanimously voted last night to sign onto a letter from the Task Force on Coronavirus & Equity that demands the Governor stop any further re-opening of the Commonwealth until adequate safety protections are in place for all communities, including low-wage workers, seniors, Black and Latinx communities who are disproportionately affected by COVID-19.

“Although the overall state statistics on COVID cases are on a steady decline, we need to make a strong stand to help those who are still the most vulnerable in our community,” said Steve Katsurinis, chair of the Provincetown Board of Health. “Many members of our community are working in businesses that have high exposure rate to the public, so we need to make sure every effort is made to keep them safe. Governor Baker should delay further re-opening of the state until the health of low wages workers, seniors and communities of color are made a priority of any further re-opening plans.”

Katsurinis added, “As someone who runs a business in town, I ask my fellow business owners to join me in making sure all their employees – especially those who run the risk of being unfairly affected by COVID-19 – get a fighting chance to stay safe this summer.”

The Task Force on Coronavirus & Equity is a collection of more than 100 physicians, public health advocates & organizations, unions, community leaders, senior advocacy groups, social justice nonprofits, food banks and racial equity associations, who operate throughout Massachusetts. This group signed a joint statement asking Governor Baker to delay re-opening the state until their “Criteria for an Equitable Reopening” was met. The letter, issued June 4th, stipulates four pre-conditions to the state’s phase two of re-opening.

The four preconditions are:

- 1) Infection rates dropping for all communities for two weeks, including low-wage workers, seniors, Black and Latinx communities, and those who work in high risk industries;
- 2) Enforceable safety standards and protections for workers and support for small businesses, which includes worksite-specific hazards assessment & safety plans for businesses re-opening and funds to support underfunded local boards of health to provide enforcement capacity;
- 3) A clear and detailed plan for increased testing and increased access to testing;
- 4) The creation of a Recovery Advisory Board that includes representation of essential workers, Black and Latinx communities, people with disabilities, older adults and LGBTQ+ communities.

The communities hardest hit by the virus and its economic repercussions are those already facing marginalization because of poverty and high-risk occupations, racism and xenophobia.

“The risks of reopening will not be borne equally by all people and reopening without adequate protections is a policy decision about the value of Black and Latinx lives,” says the task force statement. “The Task Force on Coronavirus and Equity rejects the false choice between economic health and public health because they are two sides of the same coin.”

For an announcement about the task force’s full statement, <https://mapublichealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Press-Release-phase-2-criteria-6.4.20.pdf>

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