Health Equity Compact

Act to Advance Health Equity

H.1416
S.901

Lead Sponsors: Reps. Bud Williams & Judith Garcia and Sens. Pavel Payano & Liz Miranda

What is this bill and why is it needed?

Massachusetts has world-class healthcare, and yet differences in health outcomes and access to quality, affordable care, persist between communities. We must change the system so that everyone can lead healthier lives - because it is the right thing to do, and it supports our economy.

This bill helps create the opportunity for all **Massachusetts residents to live healthy lives**. It will address issues that drive equitable health outcomes, like improving access to quality care, ensuring strategic investment in underserved communities, and building a representative healthcare workforce. It will foster public and private partnership and strengthen accountability in government to forward health justice.

People living just two miles apart in Boston can have a life expectancy gap of

23 years
on average

The average life expectancy in Back Bay vs. Roxbury is 92 vs. 69 years

Black mothers are

2.5x

more likely than White non-Hispanic mothers to experience serious health problems, even die, when having a baby.

Every year, health inequity among people of color costs Massachusetts

$ 5.9 billion

According to a 2023 report from the Blue Cross Blue Shield of MA Foundation.

What does this bill do?

Improves Access and Quality of Care

- Increases access and affordability for essential healthcare support services by requiring reimbursement for community health workers, patient navigation, and interpreter services
- Ensures patients receive care that meets health equity standards
- Provides full MassHealth coverage for all those eligible, regardless of immigration status
- Maintains affordable access to telehealth services for primary care and chronic disease management

Invests in Communities and a Sustainable Health Workforce

- Spurs investment in community-driven efforts to build healthier communities by incentivizing public-private partnerships funded by the Health Equity Zone Trust Fund
- Expands career growth opportunities for diverse health workers to advance in their fields
- Increases the number of doctors serving high-need areas by funding Graduate Medical Education

Strengthens Health Equity Leadership and Oversight

- Calls for statewide health equity goals to measure and drive progress in reducing health disparities
- Improves diversity and representation in state government agency leadership roles
- Strengthens state oversight and implementation of equity efforts by creating the Executive Office of Equity, led by the first-ever Secretary of Equity

The **Health Equity Compact** is a coalition of nearly 100 leaders of color seeking structural solutions to make healthcare and health outcomes more equitable for all residents of the Commonwealth.

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