Massachusetts Department of Public Health

DPH

Sustaining Local Public Health: Strategies, Funding, and What's Next: Panel Discussion

October 28, 2026

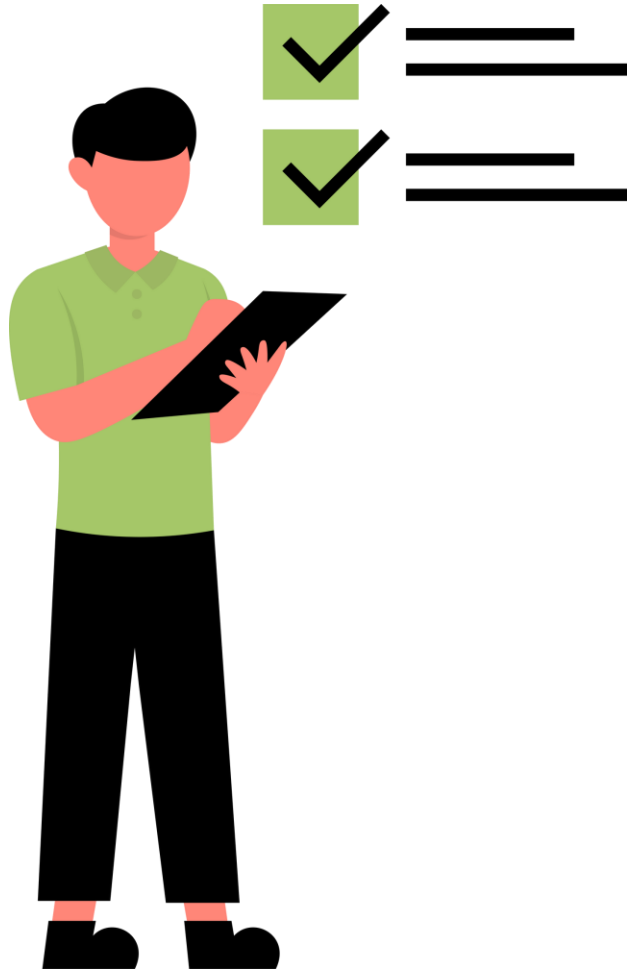
Rachael Cain

Deputy Director, Office of Local and Regional Health, DPH

Learning objectives

After the session, attendees will:

- Understand ongoing efforts to establish long-term sustainability for public health work
- Understand the intersecting and collaborative roles of the state and local public health in achieving sustainability
- Be familiar with future plans (as we currently know) in sustainability work



Agenda

01	Where we are
02	What we've built
03	How much funding for local health in FY28?
04	FY26 sustainability highlights
05	Local public health's role
06	What's Next?
07	Panel Q&A
08	Thank you

Local Public Health transformation journey

A healthier Massachusetts starts with us

Special Commission established

August 2016: The Special Commission on Local and Regional Public Health was established to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the state's public health system.

Blueprint Report recommendations released

June 2019: The Special Commission published its report, outlining six interlocking recommendations to strengthen Massachusetts' local public health service delivery.

State Action for Public Health Excellence (SAPHE) 1.0 enacted

April 2020: The state enacts a plan to strengthen and preserve local public health through cross-jurisdictional sharing and establishing performance and workforce standards.

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) signed into law

March 2021: In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, this federal law provided essential funding to support state and local governments address health impacts.

Performance Standards for Local Public Health published

October 2023: The state's first set of performance standards for public health services was released, an important step in strengthening services.

OLRH's Strategic Plan released

January 2024: The Office of Local and Regional Health (OLRH) developed its plan building on the Blueprint and ARPA's momentum to ensure the successful transformation of the state's local public health system.

SAPHE 2.0 enacted

November 2024: SAPHE 2.0 is signed into law, codifying much of the Blueprint's recommendations, which DPH began implementing in 2021.

Public Hearings held

October 2025: OLRH hosted three virtual public hearings to solicit feedback about the current state of the local public health system. A key findings report will be shared with the revived Special Commission.

What we've built since 2019

2019		2026
$0 from DPH		$13M in state budget $34M in federal funds
0 DPH-funded shared service arrangements		**54** DPH-funded shared service arrangements
114 participating municipalities		**324** participating municipalities
Limited access to training		Established a multi-tiered training structure
No clear, comprehensive, uniform, quantifiable goals for LPH		First-ever statewide Performance Standards established
Limited data for informed decision-making on funding and programming		**Expanded evidence base for decision-making** *2022 BCA • 2025 FPHS Survey • 2026 PS Survey*

How much funding will local health receive in FY28?



FY26 sustainability highlights: Legislative events

Supported 2 legislative events; attendance included:

- Lieutenant Governor Kim Driscoll
- DPH Commissioner Dr. Robbie Goldstein
- 3 Senators including Senate Ways & Means Committee Chair Michael Rodrigues
- 8 Representatives or their stand-ins
- Mayors of Salem and Fall River
- City Councilors
- Town Administrators
- Board of Health members



Salem, January 6, 2026



Westport, June 26, 2026

FY26 sustainability highlights: …And more!

Ongoing research on **successful state models** for supporting local public health

Exploring **diverse funding options**

(State, federal, other partnerships)

Technical support for sustainability

New **sustainability electives** in PHE workplan

Analyzing ways to **increase efficiencies within DPH** to streamline and maximize existing funding

Partner engagement

FY26 sustainability highlights: Spotlight series



- Communicating the Value of Local Public Health to Governmental Leaders
- How to Present Your Public Health Budget to the Finance Committee
- Building Budget Resilience for Municipal Public Health Services
- Legislative Outreach – Promoting the Importance of Local Health Work
- Communicating about Public Health with Policymakers



Recordings accessible on TRAIN Massachusetts

Communication strategies to elevate local public health

In FY26, OLRH explored how a statewide awareness effort could increase the value and impact of local public health by making it more **visible**, **understandable**, and **relevant**.

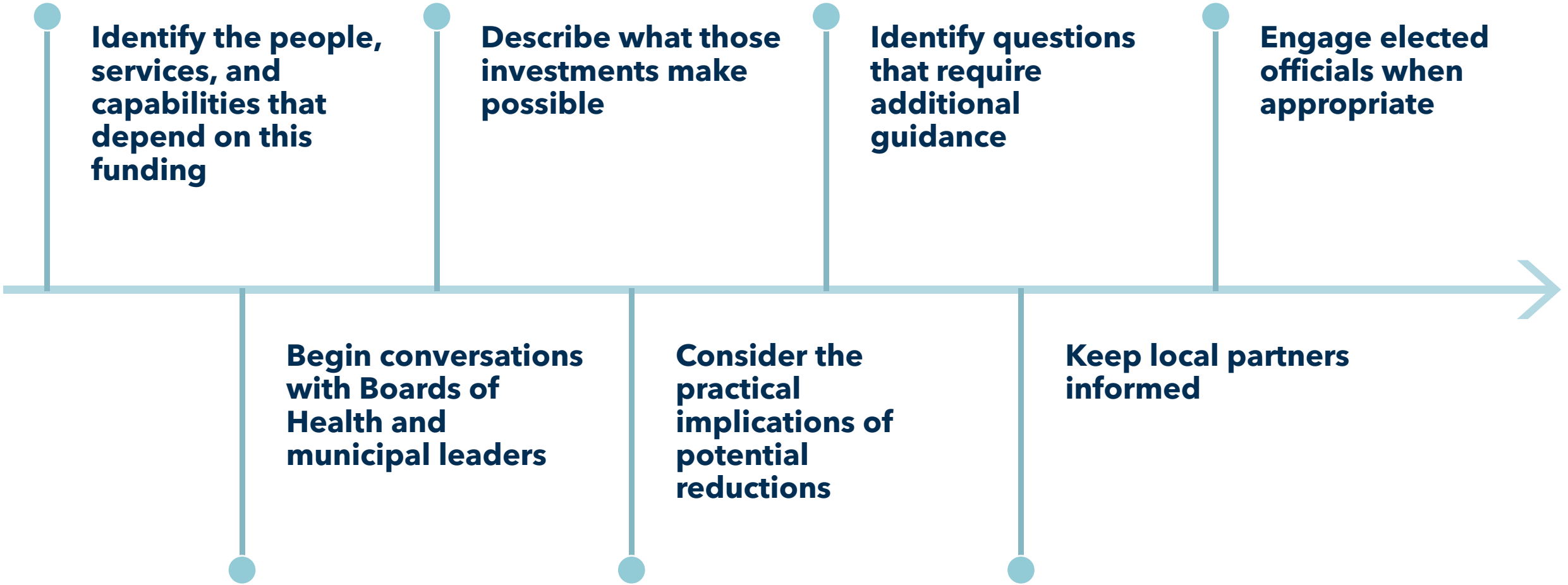
Laying the foundation

- Completed 19 individual and one group interviews
- Reviewed campaigns in other states to inform future approaches in engagement and messaging strategies
- Conducted public perception and communications analysis
- Developed a preliminary policymaker analysis to guide engagement strategies

What's happening now?

- Building the story (developing a cohesive, aligned message)
- Finding the messengers (targeting key regions to engage)
- Amplifying the message (local public health is a valued resource)

Local public health's role



Local public health's role: Legislative outreach

This is one of the most **meaningful actions** you can take!

- Host an educational event
- Invite your state senators/representative(s) to see how public health protects their communities (health fair, inspection ride-along, etc)
- Write a letter to your senators/representative(s)
- Share real stories and data from local constituents



Legislative breakfast in Fall River, MA

Reach out to OLRH for support, including access to our Legislative Event Toolkit

Local public health's role: Stay engaged!

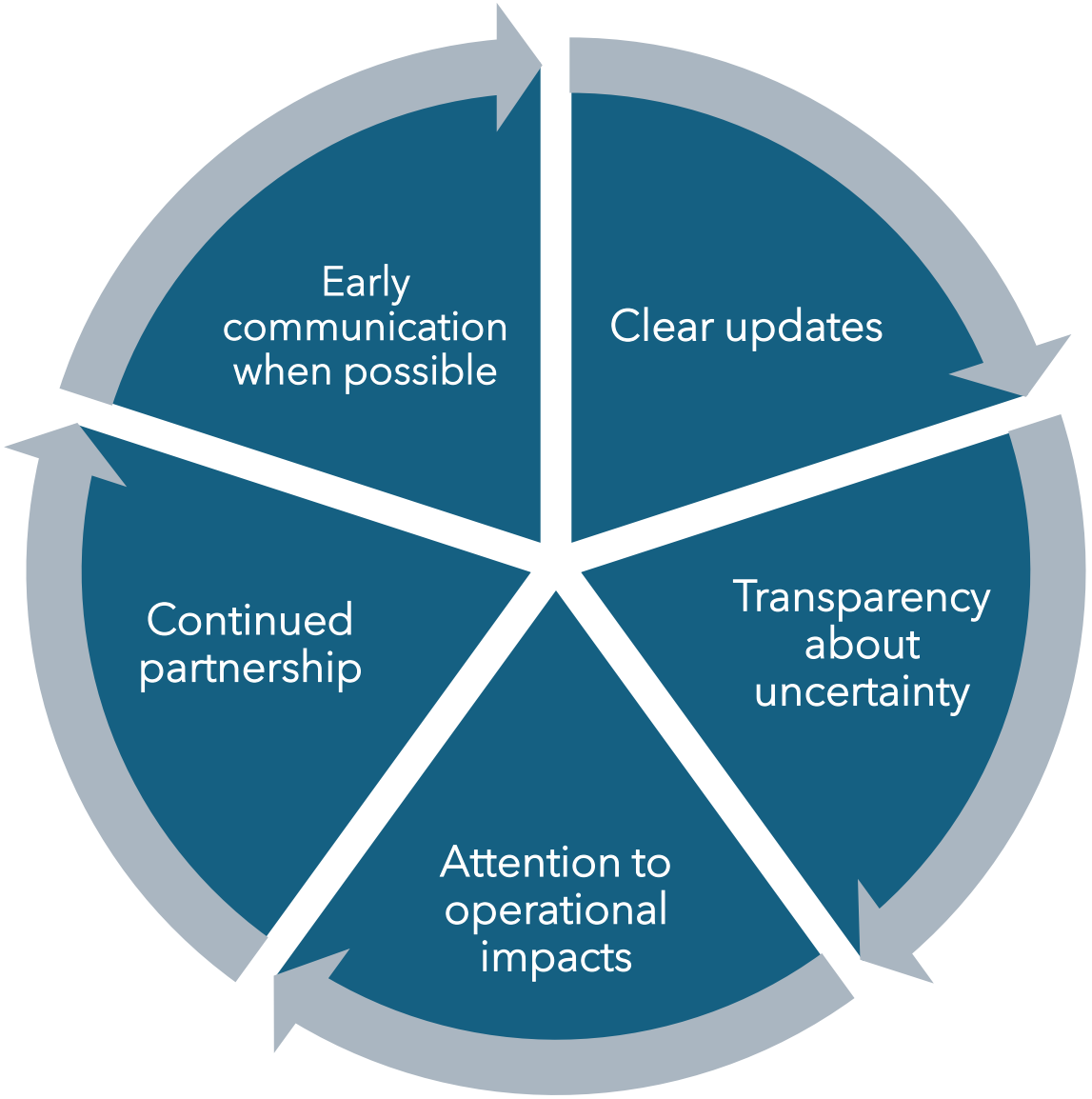
- Join **upcoming discussion opportunities** on ways the state can support LPH– stay tuned for more information
- Sign up for the new technical support category on **Sustainability Planning & Financial Analysis**

  Support for evaluating funding, costs, operational sustainability, and long-term strategies to maintain and expand local public health capacity

- Look out for regular updates in the **LPH monthly webinars** and ***the Pulse*** newsletter



What LPH can expect from DPH



What's Next?

- DPH and LPH continue to raise the visibility of local health and the funding needed
- DPH communicates at least monthly about the status of FY28
- Wherever we land, we will continue to navigate these changes together, always considering the best way we can approach keeping our communities healthy and safe

Question and answer with DPH and LPH



Share your feedback

Visit this link to share your feedback on funding priorities

Your perspective helps identify priorities, shape decisions, and build on the progress already made



Connect with OLRH

If you have any questions after today, please contact OLRH:

- Phone: (617) 753-8018
- Email: localregionalpublichealth@mass.gov