

2021-2022 Legislative Session Summary

Fenway Health Priorities

- An Act Relative to HIV Prevention Access for Young Adults
 - Sponsors: Sen. Julian Cyr, Rep. Jack Lewis, Rep. Chynah Tyler
 - Summary: Expands the mature minor rule to include HIV prevention in addition to treatment, allowing people under the age of 18 access to PrEP and PEP without parental consent when appropriate.
 - Actions: Passed and signed into law through the FY23 state budget, July 2022
 - Testimony: [5.3.21 Fenway Testimony: PrEP Access for Young Adults](#)
- An Act Relative to Preventing Overdose Deaths and Increasing Access to Treatment
 - Sponsors: Sen. Julian Cyr, Rep. Dylan Fernandes, Rep. Marjorie Decker
 - Summary: Authorizes a 10-year pilot program for two or more supervised consumption sites (SCSs) which incorporate various harm reduction tools. A SCS program provides a space for people who use drugs to consume pre-obtained drugs under the supervision of healthcare professionals or other trained staff and may provide other related services including needle exchange, overdose prevention, and referrals to treatment and other services.
 - Actions: Reported favorably by the Joint Committee on Mental Health, Substance Use and Recovery, died in Joint Committee on Healthcare Finance
 - Testimony: [9.27.21 Fenway Testimony: Supervised Consumption Sites](#)
 - Material: [Getting To Zero MA Activist Academy fellowship project: Overdose Prevention: Supervised Consumption Sites in Berkshire County](#)
- An Act Relative to Healthy Youth
 - Sponsors: Sen. Sal DiDomenico, Rep. James O'Day, Rep. Vanna Howard
 - Summary: Requires that where sex education is taught it must be comprehensive, medically accurate, age appropriate, LGBTQ inclusive, and cover consent. Requires school districts and other schools to file an annual report with DESE regarding their sex education policy and to notify parents of their sex education instruction and the right to opt out.
 - Actions: Passed in the Senate, died in House Committee on Ways and Means
 - Testimony: [5.20.21 Fenway Health: The Healthy Youth Act: Comprehensive Sex Ed](#)
 - Material: [Getting To Zero MA Activist Academy fellowship project: Sexual Health Education: Webinar, Survey, Zine](#)
- An Act Relative to Massachusetts Home Care Eligibility
 - Sponsors: Sen. Pat Jehlen, Rep. Sarah Peake
 - Summary: Expands access to homecare services for people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) before the age of 60 to address the health needs of long term survivors, some of whom experience early onset of age-related illness and impairment.
 - Actions: Reported favorably by the Joint Committee on Elder Affairs and the Joint Committee on Healthcare Finance, died in Senate Committee on Ways and Means
 - Testimony: [7.12.21 Fenway Testimony: Home Care Eligibility for PLWH](#)
- An Act to Promote Rehabilitation Including Guaranteed Health, Treatment, and Safety for Incarcerated LGBTQI+ People
 - Sponsors: Sen. Julian Cyr, Rep. Jack Lewis
 - Summary: Reduces harm faced by LGBTQI+ people who are incarcerated by ensuring the right to safety, transparency, access to HIV prevention and treatment, and affirming programming. Additionally, this bill seeks to minimize the inappropriate and disproportionate use of solitary confinement for LGBTQI+ people.

- Actions: Reported favorably by Joint Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security and the Joint Committee on Health Care Financing, died in the House Committee on Ways and Means
- Testimony: [10.21.21 Fenway Testimony: The RIGHTS Act for incarcerated LGBTQ people](#)
- An Act Providing a Bill of Rights for People Experiencing Homelessness
 - Sponsors: Sen. Rebecca Rausch, Rep. Smitty Pignatelli
 - Summary: Entitles people experiencing homelessness to the same rights as any other resident of Massachusetts: the right to move freely in public spaces, the right to equal treatment by municipal agencies (such as police departments), freedom from discrimination in employment, the right to emergency medical care, the right to register to vote and to vote, freedom from disclosure of records, and the right to a reasonable expectation of privacy of property.
 - Actions: Reported favorably by Joint Committee on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities, died in the Senate Committee on Ways and Means
 - Testimony: [10.15.21 Fenway Testimony: Bill of Rights for unhoused](#)
 - Material: [Getting To Zero MA Activist Academy fellowship project: Understanding Housing First: History, Awareness, Advocacy](#)
- An Act to Provide Identification to Youth and Adults Experiencing Homelessness
 - Sponsors: Sen. Harriette Chandler, Rep. Kay Khan
 - Summary: Requires the RMV to establish a process allowing homeless individuals to apply for identification cards; allows for the receipt of various homeless services from government agencies or other organizations in Massachusetts to act as proof of residency.
 - Actions: Passed in the Senate, died in House Committee on Ways and Means
- An Act to Create Alternatives for Community Emergency Services (ACES)
 - Sponsors: Sen. Sonia Chang-Diaz, Rep. Lindsay N. Sabadosa
 - Summary: Creates a grant program to provide a community-based alternative to law enforcement through the Department of Public Health. Law enforcement officers have become the default first responders when someone is in crisis, which disproportionately and too often violently affects communities of color. Emergency calls related to mental health, substance use, or lack of housing and health care can be resolved without law enforcement, connecting individuals to service and support.
 - Actions: Reported favorably by the Joint Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security, died in the Senate Committee on Ways and Means
 - Testimony: [7.14.21 Fenway Testimony: Alternatives for Community Emergency Services \(ACES\)](#)

Other Supported Topics

Gender Affirming Care

- An Act expanding protections for reproductive and gender-affirming care
 - Sponsors: Sen. Cindy Friedman, Sen. Lydia Edwards
 - Summary: Declares reproductive and gender affirming health care to be rights in Massachusetts; ensures protections and confidentiality for those who seek and provide this care in the state.
 - Actions: Passed and signed into law, July 2022
 - Material: [Sign on Letter for H. 5090 An Act Expanding Protections for Reproductive and Gender-Affirming Care](#)

Sex Work decriminalization

- An Act to stop profiling transgender people and low-income women
 - Sponsors: Sen. Julian Cyr, Rep. Liz Miranda

- An Act to promote the health and safety of people in the sex trade
 - Sponsor: Rep. Lindsay Sabadosa
 - Summary: These bills support full decriminalization of sex work, repeals common night-walking, and grants limited amnesty to sex workers who seek help.
 - Actions: Public hearings in the Joint Committee on Judiciary, sent to study
 - Material: [Getting To Zero MA Activist Academy fellowship project: Sex Work Decriminalization Documentary and Symposium](#)

LGBTQ Fertility and Families

- An Act relative to LGBTQ family building
 - Sponsor: Sen. Julian Cyr
- An Act relative to preserving fertility
 - Sponsors: Sen. Cynthia Stone Creem, Rep. Kevin Honan
- An Act relative to parentage to promote children's security (Parentage Act)
 - Sponsors: Sen. Bruce Tarr, Rep. Kay Khan
 - Summary: Addresses the basic rights that should be afforded all people who want to become parents, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity; ensures that children born through assisted reproduction technology (ART) have a clear route to establish their parentage and defend the equality of LGBTQ families.
 - Actions: Reported favorably by Joint Committee on Financial Services, Joint Committee on Health Care Financing, died in Senate Committee on Ways and Means; Public hearing in Joint Committee on Judiciary, sent to study.
 - Testimony:
 - [1.3.22 Fenway Testimony: Preserving Fertility and LGBTQ Family Building](#)
 - [11.9.21 Fenway Testimony: Parentage Act](#)

Hepatitis C

- An Act improving Hepatitis C screening
 - Sponsor: Sen. Mark C. Montigny
 - Summary: Expands requirements for primary care providers to offer hepatitis C screening tests to anyone over the age of 18, in line with CDC recommendations.
 - Actions: Reported favorably by Joint Committee on Public Health, Joint Committee on Health Care Financing, died in Senate Committee on Ways and Means
 - Testimony: [11.10.21 Fenway Testimony: Occ Exp Mand Test AND HIV/HCV screen](#)

Housing Rights

- An Act promoting housing stability and homelessness prevention in Massachusetts (Right to Counsel)
 - Sponsors: Sen. Sal DiDomenico, Rep. David Rogers
 - Summary: Ensures access to legal representation for those facing eviction, which would improve their ability to maintain a stable housing environment and maximize healthier outcomes for those who are living with HIV/AIDS, those who are at risk, and the overall population of people experiencing housing instability.
 - Actions: Died in Joint Committee on Housing
 - Testimony: [10.14.21 Sign On Letter: Right To Counsel](#)

Opposed Bills: Occupational Exposure/Mandated Testing

- An Act relative to the exposure of public safety officials to the AIDS virus
- An Act relative to the exposure of public safety officials to HIV
- An Act relative to the health of public safety officers
- An Act relative to healthcare worker and first responder safety
- An Act relative to HLTV 111 tests
 - Summary: These bills would undermine and eliminate essential protections built into current HIV privacy laws by allowing HIV testing without consent when potential exposure occurs in an occupational setting. This ineffective and stigmatizing policy is counterproductive and puts the potentially exposed party at greater risk.
 - Actions: These bills were all either sent to study or died in committee
 - Testimony
 - [10.12.21 Fenway Testimony: Occupational Exposure and Mandated Testing](#)
 - [11.10.21 Fenway Testimony: Occ Exp Mand Test AND HIV/HCV screen](#)