

The Public's Health and the Law in the 21st Century
5th Annual Partnership Conference

Concurrent Session

The 2006 Massachusetts Health Care Reform Act

Wednesday, June 14, 2006
10:30-12:00 pm

Moderator: Bradley Perkins, MD, MBA, Acting Chief of Strategy and Innovation, Office of the Director, CDC, Atlanta, GA

Presenter: John E. McDonough, DrPH, MPA, Executive Director, Health Care for All, Boston, MA

Session Purpose:

In April 2006, Massachusetts enacted a new law requiring all residents to have health insurance by July 2007. The act combines mandates on workers and businesses with income-conditioned premium assistance, low-cost private market insurance coverage, pre-tax purchase of health insurance, and other measures, all intended to bring the estimated 7 percent of uninsured Massachusetts residents under health care insurance coverage.

The Massachusetts act includes a number of provisions intended to channel resources toward universal health care coverage, including redirection of \$680 million from aid to hospitals that serve the poor to help cover the cost of the expanded insurance coverage instead. In an attempt to narrow health care disparities, the legislation also requires hospitals to collect detailed data about patients' race and other characteristics.

In his signing comments, Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney hailed the legislation as a once-in-a-generation achievement.

Passage of the Massachusetts legislation has stimulated much interest in the potential for its adaptation to other states, many of which have taken steps of their own to expand access to health care. From the public health point of view, a key issue is how state health care access measures can incorporate "upstream" prevention and health promotion along with treatment for those whose health already is compromised by preventable conditions.

The Massachusetts legislation was shaped and propelled by many organizations; prominent among these was Health Care for All, a Boston-based nonprofit organization headed by John E. McDonough.

In this late-breaker session, Dr. McDonough will give a presentation on the origins and provisions of the Massachusetts legislation and his perspective on factors that came into play as the legislation was shaped, debated, and enacted. This will be a unique opportunity to explore with Dr. McDonough such issues as the measure's relevance to

other states and steps states active in health care access initiatives may consider in order to expand the availability of preventive health services.

Dr. McDonough has been Executive Director of Health Care for All since 2003 and also teaches at the Harvard University School of Public Health. He served as a member of the Massachusetts House of Representatives, 1985-1997, co-chairing its Joint Committee on Health Care, and later was an Associate Professor at the Heller School at Brandeis University and a Senior Associate at its Schneider Institute for Health Policy.

Learning Objectives:

By the close of this session, conference participants will be able to:

- Identify principal provisions of the 2006 Massachusetts health care reform act;
- Describe factors that contributed to passage of the Massachusetts legislation and that bear on its potential replicability in other states; and
- Explain considerations that states may take into account in weighing legislation to expand health insurance coverage and in orienting such legislation toward prevention and health promotion.

Session Co-Conveners:

Office of the Chief of Public Health Practice and Office of the Chief of Strategy and Innovation, CDC

Resource Materials:

2006 Mass. ALS 58: <http://www.mass.gov/legis/laws/seslaw06/sl060058.htm>.

Health Care for All: <http://www.hcfama.org>

"Can Mass. Health Plan Work Elsewhere?", Daniel C. Vock, Stateline.org:
<http://www.stateline.org/live/ViewPage.action?siteNodId=136&languageId=1&contentId=110866>