



Testimony of Annamarie Golden
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in support of
An Act to Promote High-Impact Community Investment (H.2617 & S. 1511)

May 9, 2017

Good afternoon Chairman Brady, Chairman Kaufman, and members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. On behalf of Baystate Health, our President and CEO, Dr. Mark Keroack, and our volunteer Board of Trustees, I am here today to offer our enthusiastic support for An Act to Promote High-Impact Community Investment (H. 2617 & S. 1511) filed by Senator Sal DiDomenico and Representative Steve Kulik.

Baystate Health, based in western Massachusetts, is a not-for-profit healthcare organization that employs more than 12,000 team members and serves more than 800,000 patients throughout the region. Our services include the regional tertiary care academic medical center, three community hospitals, medical practices, home care, hospice and more.

Baystate Health is a place-based anchor institution tied by our mission to the long-term well-being of the diverse communities we serve. We embrace the definition of health to include social determinants, such as economic opportunity, affordable housing, education, safe neighborhoods, food security, social and racial justice, and arts/culture – all elements that are needed for individuals, families, and communities to thrive.

I would like to share a story of a patient, a young girl by the name of Sarah. Sarah frequently presented in our pediatric emergency department, often requiring hospitalization due to her chronic asthma. Upon each of her visits Sarah was provided with quality clinical care. However, to truly improve the health of Sarah we needed to understand the root causes of her asthma attacks, many of which presumably were avoidable.

Through a partnership with a community development organization, such as Revitalize CDC in Springfield, Sarah's sick house would be "treated" through a home remediation assessment, followed by interventions including, mold abatement and the safe elimination of other asthma triggers, thus creating a healthier home for Sarah and her family.

By treating the home, Sarah's quality of life improved. She no longer frequented the ED, her single-mother did not have to miss work, and Sarah and her siblings did not miss school.

Sarah's improved health and quality of life outcomes are not because of Baystate Health and our clinical providers, but rather because of a unique opportunity and partnership.

The health care sector, including hospitals and health insurers cannot solve or address social determinants of health alone. We are however able to create sustainable change, improve outcomes, and demonstrate impact through partnerships with CDC's.

Investing in CDC's allows hospitals, such as Baystate Health, to support programs that don't fall in the narrow definition of health. By working with and through CDC's we can address broader social determinants of health, including, housing, transportation, and education.

Baystate Health's current partnership with Revitalize CDC on the Green and Healthy Homes Initiative (GHHI) strengthens our ability to make place-based and targeted investments that are well aligned with our health system values. We are able to leverage housing improvements and simultaneously revitalize the community, while helping to meet our patient's essential human needs.

For many years Baystate Health's community benefits investments were limited to smaller one-time grants. Investing in our local CDC's have provided us the opportunity to address upstream social determinants and provide more meaningful, longer-term investments.

CDC's are targeting and focusing resources in communities identified as having the highest needs and health disparities, thus making them and their programs perfect partners as we transform health care from fee-for-service to population-based.

On behalf of our hospital leadership, team members, and patients, I urge you to put your full support behind An Act to Promote High-Impact Community Investment (H.2617 & S. 1511).

Sincerely,
Annamarie K. H. Golden
Manager, Public Health and Community Relations
Baystate Health