

Abstract

Massachusetts is the fourteenth most populous state in the nation, with over 6.7 million people residing in 351 cities/towns. Only five cities have populations greater than 100,000, while approximately 270 have populations less than 20,000 (US Census). The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) proposes activities which will address priority public health capacity building to respond to Ebola and other emerging and highly-infectious diseases. Activities will focus on Healthcare Infection Control Assessment and Response, Enhanced Laboratory Biosafety and Biosecurity Capacity, and Global Migration, Border Interventions, and Migrant Health.

Healthcare Infection Control Assessment and Response

The MDPH Bureau of Infectious Disease and Bureau of Health Care Safety and Quality proposes activities that will enhance capacity for infection prevention preparedness. Specific objectives include developing an Infection Control and Promotion Program to conduct ongoing monitoring of the MA designated Ebola assessment/treatment hospitals, expand assessments to include additional settings of care, increase adherence to infection prevention recommendations, identify and develop additional focused training, increase coordination of statewide activities, update the Massachusetts HAI Action Plan, conduct an inventory of all healthcare facilities to enhance regulatory oversight and identify infection prevention points of contact. Requested funding will also improve MDPH's ability to assess outbreak reporting and response and to enhance reporting and surveillance activities.

Enhanced Laboratory Biosafety and Biosecurity Capacity

Proposed activities will further advance a strong culture of safety at the Massachusetts State Public Health Laboratory and the clinical LRN sentinel laboratories. Resources will allow for the education and training necessary to overcome knowledge gaps and bridge and enhance communication between the Massachusetts State Public Health Laboratory and clinical sentinel laboratories to ensure the safe handling, shipping, testing and disposal of specimen tested for Ebola and other emerging infectious diseases.

Global Migration, Border Interventions, and Migrant Health

Proposed activities will improve the public health response in Massachusetts to public health risks associated with travel, migration and importation of pathogens. The Bureau of Infectious Disease, Division of Global Populations and Infectious Disease Prevention will maintain epidemiology capacity focused on globally mobile populations, develop and post reports on infectious disease and globally mobile populations to increase understanding and knowledge of infectious diseases among globally mobile populations, identify infectious diseases in known refugee and immigrant arrival populations, engage globally mobile communities at risk for infectious diseases, provide education regarding port of entry International Health Regulations and continue and deepen collaboration with the New York Quarantine Station at JFK Airport. The MDPH web-based surveillance system will be enhanced to improve response and investigations involving international travel.