



## **World Health Network**

**October 17, 2023**

### **Open letter to State Auditor Diana DiZoglio**

**To: Auditor Diana DiZoglio**

Massachusetts State House, Room 230, Boston, MA 02133 Auditor@sao.state.ma.us

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**Subject:** Performance Audit of MA Department of Public Health (DPH)

Dear Auditor DiZoglio,

We, on behalf of the [World Health Network \(WHN\)](#), ask the Auditor to undertake a performance audit to investigate and evaluate if the actions and policies of the Department of Public Health (DPH) regarding procedures in hospitals and other health care settings covering infection control procedures for airborne disease are consistent with their mission.

We all hope for an end to the ongoing pandemic of COVID, and we know how to use a suite of interventions and behaviors to diminish this threat to public health. Prevention is a public health responsibility and preventing infection in healthcare, of both healthcare workers and patients, is an essential responsibility of healthcare institutions and public health authorities so that safe access to healthcare is possible for everyone.

Instead, the Mass Department of Public Health (DPH) and hospitals have declared the end of mandates and measures for limiting transmission of COVID and other airborne disease. Catching COVID in a hospital when already ill for another reason is deadly. Between one in five and one in

ten people who catch COVID-19 in a hospital after having come there for some completely other reason, [end up dying](#).

The mission of the DPH does not align with and justify current policies.

“The mission of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health is to prevent illness, injury, and premature death, to assure access to high quality public health and health care services, and to promote wellness and health equity for all people in the Commonwealth ...We also develop, implement, promote, and enforce policies to assure that the conditions under which people live are most conducive to health and enable people to make healthy choices for themselves and their families.”—<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/about-the-department-of-public-health>

Current DPH policies, instead of aligning with their mission of preventing illness, injury and premature death, ignore our scientific understanding of how to limit and prevent aerosol transmission of COVID in healthcare settings. Instead, they enable patients, visitors, and medical staff to abandon effective methods of disease transmission and thereby expose them to infection. Equity is not implemented, since hospitals have failed to make reasonable accommodations readily available to vulnerable persons, forcing many of those at elevated risk to choose between the risk of infection when they get health care and the dangers of not receiving care. People do not have the ability to make good health choices in this environment.

We are writing on behalf of the [World Health Network \(WHN\)](#), a global community devoted to protecting health and minimizing harm to individuals and society in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We advocate for effective responses to end the pandemic as a global health threat. Our members have guided successful elimination efforts, advised governments, advocated for airborne precautions, and led community-based efforts to promote individual and public health. We are independent from any political body or government. We are guided by compassion, science, transparency, social responsibility, and value for life.

We have attached a list of resources covering key topics related to our concerns for your information.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to us for any clarification. We are willing to meet with you to assist in your work on this important issue.

**Sincerely,**



**Greta Fox**

Massachusetts Resident, and Member of the Covid Action Group, Science and Policy Group,  
World Health Network



**Yaneer Bar-Yam**

Massachusetts Resident, and Member of the Covid Action Group, Science and Policy Group,  
World Health Network



**Stephane Bilodeau**

Chair, Covid Action Group, Science and Policy Group, World Health Network

**Jerry Halberstadt**

Massachusetts Resident, and Member, World Health Network

## **Resources**

**[The mission of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health](#)**

**DPH POLICY:** *[Massachusetts COVID-19 public health emergency to end May 11.](#)*  
*[Here's what that means.](#)*

## Articles by World Health Network

**[Five pillars of prevention](#)**

**[The Case for Keeping Masks Mandatory in Health Care](#)**

**[Towards a Culture of Mask-wearing](#)**

**[COVID Effects on the Brain, a Summary and Resource](#)**

## Selected articles

**[Letters to the Infection Prevention and Control Team](#)**

**Consensus: 386 Experts From Around the World Say Bringing the Pandemic to an End Is an Urgent Matter**

Lazarus, J.V., Romero, D., Kopka, C.J. et al. ***A multinational Delphi consensus to end the COVID-19 public health threat. Nature 611, 332–345 (2022).***

***COVID-19: examining the effectiveness of non-pharmaceutical interventions – Executive summary*** N Engl J Med 2022; 387:1935-1946

***Over-exposed and under-protected: the long-term impact of COVID-19 on doctors,***  
British Medical Association, 16 January 2023

The Royal Society, ***Daniel M Altmann, Emily M Whettlock, Siyi Liu, Deepa J Arachchillage, Rosemary J Boyton, The immunology of long COVID*** Nat Rev Immunol. 2023 Jul 11

Kalu, I., Henderson, D., Weber, D., & Haessler, S. (2023). ***Back to the future: Redefining “universal precautions” to include masking for all patient encounters.*** ***Infection Control & Hospital Epidemiology, 1-2.***

Hannah E Davis, Lisa McCorkell, Julia Moore Vogel & Eric J. Topol, ***Long COVID: major findings, mechanisms and recommendations,*** *Nat Rev Microbiol* 21, 133–146 (2023).

***Michael G Baker, David Durrheim, Li Yang Hsu & Nick Wilson, COVID-19 and other pandemics require a coherent response strategy,*** *The Lancet*, Volume 401, Issue 10273

Paula Span, ***For Older Americans, the Pandemic Is Not Over,*** NYT, Feb 11, 2023

Julia Raifman, Sc.D., and Tiffany Green, Ph.D., ***Universal Masking Policies in Schools and Mitigating the Inequitable Costs of Covid-19,*** N Engl J Med 2022; 387:1993-1994, Nov 24, 2022

Kieren Williams, '*We need to do better*' - over 14,000 people died with Covid after catching it in hospital, the Mirror. 16 March 2023