

CHRISTINE McKIERNAN, M.D. - Chair  
MICHAEL ROSNER, M.D. - Vice Chair  
KAREN WALSH PIO - Clerk  
TONY JUDGE  
STEPHEN FRANTZ

SHARON HART, Director of Public Health

**NOTICE**

**BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING  
&  
AGENDA**

**February 11, 2025**

**6:00 p.m.**

Join Zoom Webinar from your Computer:

Join from PC, Mac, iPad, or Android:

Passcode:527877

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87294562084?tk=92PLP7>

Or join by phone

US: +1 564 217 2000 US

Webinar ID: 872 9456 2084

Passcode: 527877

**NOTE: Not all the topics listed in this notice may actually be reached for discussion. In addition, the topics listed are those which the Chair reasonably expects will be discussed as of the date of this notice.**

**To: Board of Health Members**

**From: Sharon D. Hart, Director of Public Health**

**Re: A Board of Health Meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 11, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. at the South Hadley Library.**

- 1: Chair to Call the Meeting to Order**
- 2: Acceptance of the Minutes of the January 28, 2025 meeting.**
- 3: Announcements/Open Forum (10 Minutes)**

**4: Director's Report**

**5: New Business:**

(a): Policy for Cremation of Certain Unclaimed Bodies – Sharon Hart

(b): Effect of federal restrictions on public health communications, information and research

**6: Old Business:**

(a): EPA Promoting Fertilizer Full of PFAS Despite Knowing Risks– Stephen Frantz

(b): Letter of Support for Phone & Social Media Free Schools in Massachusetts - South Hadley Policy – Karen Walsh Pio

(c): Board of Health representative to the SH Human Rights Commission- Lori Souder

**7: Set Next Meeting Date – (TBD) at 6:00 p.m. at South Hadley Public Library**

**8: Adjourn meeting**

CHRISTINE MCKIERNAN, M.D., Chair  
Michael Rosner M.D., Vice-Chair  
KAREN WALSH PIO, LICSW, LADC-I, Clerk  
STEPHEN FRANTZ  
TONY JUDGE

SHARON HART, Director of Public Health

February 11, 2025

**TOWN OF SOUTH HADLEY  
PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT  
POLICY FOR CREMATION OF CERTAIN UNCLAIMED BODIES**

On July 31, 2018 the Commonwealth of Massachusetts adopted the Acts of 2018 c. 203, an Act Relative to the Cremation of Certain Unclaimed Bodies (effective July 1, 2018), which states in part "a board of health may serve as the duly authorized representative for the purpose of requesting cremation of unclaimed body remains by signing a cremation form under the following circumstances: (i) the unclaimed remains shall be in a location that is within the jurisdiction of the board of health, (ii) the board of health has received notice from a licensed funeral director that either no person has come forward to claim the remains or that no person may legally claim the remains provided, however, that the board of health shall wait 30 days after such notification under this clause prior to signing the cremation form. The unclaimed remains shall then be viewed by a medical examiner or forensic investigator designated by the chief medical officer pursuant to section 14 of Chapter 38, who shall authorize cremation only when no further examination or judicial inquiry concerning the death is necessary. The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner may waive the fee set forth in said section 14 of Chapter 38 for cremation authorizations pursuant to this section. There shall be no liability for a board of health or an employee, agent, or licensee thereof that authorizes the disposal of unclaimed remains in accordance with this section."

On February 11, 2025, the South Hadley Board of Health voted to authorize the Director of Public Health or the Assistant Director of Public Health as its designee(s) to act in accordance with section 43M of Chapter 114 of the Massachusetts General Laws. This vote allows the Director of Public Health or the Assistant Director of Public Health to sign a cremation form under certain circumstances as specifically set forth in said statute.

To provide notice in accordance with the statute, a licensed funeral director may fully complete and submit a Cremation Form to the Director of Public Health. A Cremation Form can be obtained by contacting the South Hadley Public Health Department (413)538-5030 x 6184. After receiving notice, the Director of Public Health or Assistant Director of Public Health is required to wait thirty (30) days prior to signing the form. The Director of Public Health or Assistant Director of Public Health will notify the funeral director after the form to authorize cremation has been signed. The funeral director may then obtain a signed copy of the form.

of a human body which is not claimed by a next-of-kin or duly authorized representative within 12 months after the date of cremation may have the remains interred or placed in a common grave, niche, or crypt in a cemetery, or scattered in an area of the cemetery designated for that purpose; provided, however, that if the deceased is a veteran of the United States Armed Forces the deceased shall be interred at a veterans' cemetery. Each cemetery and funeral establishment shall maintain permanent records of such disposition. There shall be no liability for a funeral establishment, cemetery or crematory, or any employee or agent thereof that disposes of unclaimed cremated remains in accordance with this section. Each municipality or cemetery corporation shall maintain records which identify the name, if known, of the dead human body or remains in each burial lot, tomb or vault under its control. No deposit of the bodies or remains of the human dead shall be made in a single chamber, vault or tomb wholly or partly above the natural surface of the ground unless the part thereof below such surface is of a permanent character, constructed of materials capable of withstanding extreme climatic conditions, waterproof and air tight, and capable of being sealed permanently to prevent all escape of effluvia, and unless the part thereof above the natural surface of the ground is constructed of natural stone of a standard not less than that required by the United States government for monuments erected in national cemeteries, of durability sufficient to withstand all conditions of weather.

Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary and for the purposes of this section, a board of health may serve as the duly authorized representative for the purpose of requesting cremation of unclaimed remains by signing a cremation form under the following circumstances: (i) the unclaimed remains shall be in a location that is

**Part I** ADMINISTRATION OF THE  
GOVERNMENT

**Title** PUBLIC HEALTH

**XVI**

**Chapter** CEMETERIES AND BURIALS

**114**

**Section** PERMANENT DISPOSITION OF  
DEAD BODIES OR REMAINS

**43M**

Section 43M. Except as otherwise provided by law, or in case of a dead body being rightfully carried through or removed from the commonwealth for the purpose of burial or disposition elsewhere, every dead body of a human being dying within the commonwealth, and the remains of any body after dissection therein, shall be decently buried, entombed in a mausoleum, vault or tomb or cremated within a reasonable time after death. The permanent disposition of such bodies or remains shall be by interment in the earth or deposit in a chamber, vault or tomb of a cemetery owned, maintained and operated in accordance with the laws of this commonwealth, by deposit in a crypt of a mausoleum, or by cremation. The remains of a human body after cremation may be deposited in a niche of a columbarium or a crypt of a mausoleum, buried or disposed of in any manner not contrary to law. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, a funeral establishment in possession of the cremated remains

within the jurisdiction of the board of health; (11) the board of health has received notice from a licensed funeral director that either no person has come forward to claim the remains or that no person may legally claim the remains; provided, however, that the board of health shall wait 30 days after such notification under this clause prior to signing the cremation form. The unclaimed remains shall then be viewed by a medical examiner or forensic investigator designated by the chief medical examiner pursuant to section 14 of chapter 38, who shall authorize such cremation only when no further examination or judicial inquiry concerning the death is necessary. The office of the chief medical examiner may waive the fee set forth in said section 14 of said chapter 38 for cremation authorizations pursuant to this section. There shall be no liability for a board of health or an employee, agent, or licensee thereof that authorizes the disposal of unclaimed remains in accordance with this section. Nothing in this section shall supersede the obligations of the office of the chief medical examiner as set forth in this chapter and chapter 38.

**Part I** ADMINISTRATION OF THE  
GOVERNMENT

**Title VI** COUNTIES AND COUNTY  
OFFICERS

**Chapter** MEDICAL EXAMINERS AND  
**38** INQUESTS

**Section** BODIES INTENDED FOR  
**14** CREMATION OR BURIAL AT SEA;  
AUTHORIZATION; FEES

Section 14. A medical examiner or forensic investigator designated by the chief medical examiner shall, on payment of a fee as determined from time to time by the secretary of public safety, which shall be not less than \$75, view the body and make personal inquiry concerning the cause and manner of death of any person whose body is intended for cremation or burial at sea and shall authorize such cremation or burial at sea only when no further examination or judicial inquiry concerning such death is necessary. Said fee shall be paid by the person to whom such authorization for cremation or burial at sea is given. Cremation fees collected by the office of the chief medical examiner shall be utilized to support the comprehensive system of medico-legal investigative services delivered by the agency. District medical examiners employed on a fee-for-service basis shall be compensated for performance of cremation views at a rate

set by the secretary of public safety. Other medical examiners or forensic investigators performing cremation views will not receive additional compensation beyond their specified salaries.

# Acts (2018)

## Chapter 203

### AN ACT RELATIVE TO THE CREMATION OF CERTAIN UNCLAIMED BODIES.

*Whereas*, The deferred operation of this act would tend to defeat its purpose, which is to provide forthwith for the cremation of certain unclaimed bodies, therefore it is hereby declared to be an emergency law, necessary for the immediate preservation of the public convenience.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same as follows:*

SECTION 1. Section 43M of chapter 114 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2016 Official Edition, is hereby amended by adding the following paragraph:-

Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary and for the purposes of this section, a board of health may serve as the duly authorized representative for the purpose of requesting cremation of unclaimed remains by signing a cremation form under the following circumstances: (i) the unclaimed remains shall be in a location that is within the jurisdiction of the board of health; (ii) the board of health has received notice from a licensed funeral director that either no person has come forward to claim the remains or that no person may legally claim the remains; provided, however, that the board of health

shall wait 30 days after such notification under this clause prior to signing the cremation form. The unclaimed remains shall then be viewed by a medical examiner or forensic investigator designated by the chief medical examiner pursuant to section 14 of chapter 38, who shall authorize such cremation only when no further examination or judicial inquiry concerning the death is necessary. The office of the chief medical examiner may waive the fee set forth in said section 14 of said chapter 38 for cremation authorizations pursuant to this section. There shall be no liability for a board of health or an employee, agent, or licensee thereof that authorizes the disposal of unclaimed remains in accordance with this section. Nothing in this section shall supersede the obligations of the office of the chief medical examiner as set forth in this chapter and chapter 38.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect as of July 1, 2018.

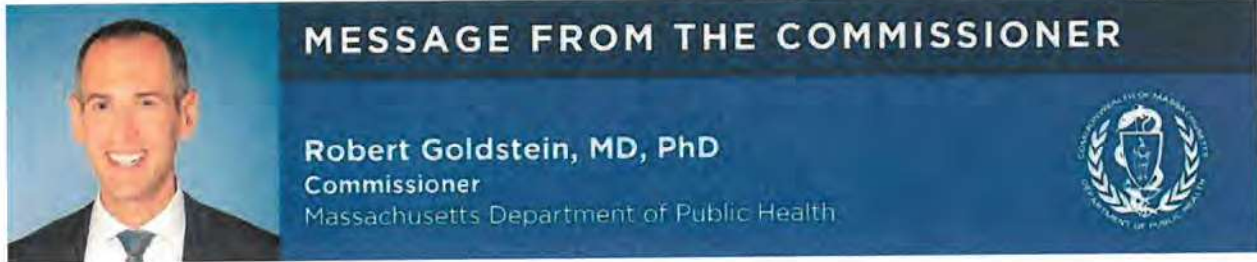
*Approved, August 9, 2018.*

Samuel S. Wong, PhD

(he, him, his)

Director, Office of Local and Regional Health

Massachusetts Department of Public Health



Dear Colleagues,

I understand that the executive orders and actions taken by the Trump Administration in its initial week in office have been confusing, concerning, and disruptive to the day-to-day work of the Department. Many of you are likely wondering how these changes will affect your jobs and our work, and if — or when — these decisions will take effect. We do not, yet, have all the answers. Still, I want to assure you that we remain committed to our mission, and we remain determined to continue the progress we have made.

Uncertainty is challenging. It is natural to feel unsettled when faced with rapid changes to a system and way of operating that we have known and are comfortable with. President Trump campaigned on a message of disrupting the status quo. We are now seeing that play out. We must traverse this new landscape while staying true to our core values and purpose.

I have been asked by many inside and outside the Department why we are not “pushing back” against these changes. My response — our response — is that we will keep moving forward. We will not alter who we are. We will not change what we stand for. We will never stray from our mission. We will adapt as necessary, and we will maintain our commitment to the people of Massachusetts.

In times of uncertainty, we must look to what remains certain. We can remain confident in our identity, values, and mission. We will await further information about how these changes will unfold, and if needed, we will adjust our strategies accordingly. It will not be

easy, and it may not be smooth. But we will not forget who we are and the dedicated and compassionate community here at DPH that we can lean on for support.

Remember, our strength lies in our commitment to public health and our ability to be nimble and ready to adapt to new challenges. We will continue to serve the Commonwealth to the best of our abilities, regardless of the uncertainty and challenges ahead.

Thank you for your continued dedication and hard work. Together, we will navigate these changes and continue to make a positive impact on the health and well-being of communities across the state.

With gratitude,



Robbie

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Robbie Goldstein, MD, PhD (he/him)  
Commissioner, Massachusetts Department of Public Health

\*Do not print this email unless necessary

**3 attachments**



**image003.png**  
2K



**image004.png**  
2K



**image005.png**  
2K

# EPA Promoting Fertilizer Full of PFAS Despite Knowing Risks

**New reporting shows the EPA was warned over 20 years ago that sewage sludge contained high levels of so-called "forever chemicals."**

By BRETT WILKINS · Dec 27, 2024



The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency continues to promote a commonly used commercial fertilizer despite being informed over 20 years ago that its key component contained high levels of so-called "forever chemicals," a *New York Times* investigation revealed Friday.

The *Times'* Hiroko Tabuchi reviewed thousands of pages of decades-old documents and found that scientists at chemical giant 3M discovered high levels of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in U.S. sewage during the early

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***"The EPA continues to promote sewage sludge as fertilizer and doesn't require testing for PFAS."***

However, as Tabuchi noted, "the EPA continues to promote sewage sludge as fertilizer and doesn't require testing for PFAS, despite the fact that whistleblowers, academics, state officials, and the agency's internal studies over the years have also raised contamination concerns."

According to the U.S. Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, PFAS are linked to cancers of the kidneys and testicles, low infant weight, suppressed immune function, and other adverse health effects. They are found in the blood of around 99% of people around the world. EPA data show there's PFAS in the drinking water of tens of millions of Americans.

According to Tabuchi, EPA experts raised concerns about PFAS as far back as the 1990s, but their warnings went unheeded.

The *Times* investigation follows reporting earlier this month led by *Prism's* Rebecca Barglowski showing that EPA and state officials in New Jersey have known about PFAS-contaminated water for nearly two decades.

Tabuchi noted that "the country is starting to wake up to the consequences" of PFAS' ubiquity. However, only one state—Maine—has begun systematically testing farms for PFAS. It has also banned the use of sewage sludge to fertilize

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Trump will roll back Biden-era regulations, disempower agency specialists, and let political appointees make crucial regulatory decisions.

Even under Biden, the EPA is arguing that it cannot be sued for taking inadequate action to protect the public from PFAS contamination.

In June, Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER) sued the EPA on behalf of a group of farmers, ranchers, and green groups "for failing to perform its nondiscretionary duty to identify and regulate toxic pollutants in sewage sludge" used as fertilizer. In September, the EPA moved to dismiss the lawsuit, arguing that it has complete discretion regarding the identification and listing of pollutants.

"EPA seems to have lost any sense of its legal and moral obligation to protect public health," attorney and former EPA scientist Kyla Bennett said at the time. "Under the plain language of the Clean Water Act, EPA has a mandatory duty to identify and regulate substances that are a threat to human health and the environment—not just to issue a report about it."

On January 20th, it begins...

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Political revenge. Mass deportations. Project 2025. Unfathomable corruption. Attacks on Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. Pardons for insurrectionists. An all-out assault on democracy.

Republicans in Congress are scrambling to give Trump broad new powers to strip the tax-exempt status of any nonprofit he doesn't like by declaring it a "terrorist-supporting organization." Trump has already begun filing lawsuits against news outlets that criticize him. At Common Dreams, we won't back down, but we must get ready for whatever Trump and his thugs throw at us.


**Our Year-End campaign is our most important fundraiser of the year.** As a people-powered nonprofit news outlet, we cover issues the corporate media never will, but we can only continue with

**Paul M. donated \$27.20**

 Melbourne, Australia

6 hours ago

**Czikus C. donated €16.30**

 Amsterdam, The Netherlands

7 hours ago

**Hans L. donated \$8.80**

 Stockholm, Sweden

9 hours ago

**Walter B. donated \$5.50**

9 hours ago

**Marni H. donated \$4.60**

 Lansing, United States

"I've been following you and advocating for you for years, but unable to give. I've just been approved for SSI and I want to share it with you, but I can't afford very much. Things are so very bad in the world right now and we need you to keep up the good work you

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# Letter of Support for Phone & Social Media Free Schools in Massachusetts

This effort is being led by the Massachusetts Coalition for Phone and Social Media Free Schools which includes the following organizations: [Becca Schmill Foundation](#), [Smartphone Free Childhood US Parent Collective](#), [APPstinent](#), [Turning Life On](#), [Arlington Parents – Smartphone Sense](#), and [Sudbury for Digital Balance](#), as well as concerned parents, community members, educators, and public health professionals.

For FAQs, please see our [Briefing Document](#).

## THE LETTER

Dear Massachusetts Legislators,

We, the undersigned parents, teachers, students, and community members, support the introduction of legislation to ensure that every student in Massachusetts has access to the benefits of a school environment that is free from personal electronic devices and social media, and prioritizes student [academic learning](#), [focus](#), [social development](#), and [emotional well-being](#).

The U.S. is experiencing a mental health crisis. The causes may be multifaceted, but the weight of the evidence clearly shows **a significant relationship with exposure to social media and other digital and online products**. U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy has said that children need device-free spaces – including schools – and has called on Congress to require warning labels on social media. Dr. Murthy says that, “the risk of not acting could be someone’s life.” <https://edhub.ama-assn.org/jn-learning/video-player/18901909>

Extensive research has made it abundantly clear that bell-to-bell personal device-free policies [improve school environments by increasing academic engagement](#), [improving learning outcomes](#), and [student’s social connection](#). Devices, including but not limited to cellular phones, tablets, smartwatches, [other wearables](#), and gaming devices, distract from learning and interrupt opportunities for students to engage in face to face interaction with each other.

Social media platforms are also a source of distraction and increased opportunities for cyberbullying. In May 2023, U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy stated that social media platforms [have not been determined to be sufficiently safe](#) for use by children and adolescents.

For the reasons stated above, we support the implementation of the following:


1. Personal electronic device-free schools, from “first bell to last bell,” where devices are turned off, securely locked away, and inaccessible to students during school hours and while students are being supervised by district staff.



2. Prohibition of integrating social media platforms into student education (with exceptions for medical needs and IEP plans), and communications for school-to-student, or after-school programs run by the school district. This does **not** prevent a school from using social media for non-student community communication and school to parent/guardian communication.

Thank you for considering this legislation.

gmaende@southhadleyma.gov 

 Not shared

\* Indicates required question

First Name: \*

Your answer

Last Name: \*

Your answer

Email: (will not displayed or shared) \*


Your answer

Town where you reside: \*

Your answer



Role that most closely describes your interest in this topic: \*

Choose 

Are you signing this letter as an individual, an organization, or both? \*

- Individual
- Organization (clicking here is confirmation of your authority to endorse on behalf of your organization)
- Both

Your Organization Name: (if applicable)

Your answer

Your Title or Profession: (if applicable)

Your answer

If your school or district currently has a bell-to-bell smartphone free policy, would you be willing to write a short testimonial or take a call so we can collect feedback? \*

- Not applicable
- Yes, I would be willing to provide a testimonial based on personal or professional experience
- No, not interested at this time



Are you interested in helping the Coalition advocate for Phone and Social Media Free Schools?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

By submitting this form, you agree to allow your name and/or your organization name to be included in a list of supporters of Phone and Social Media Free Schools on materials used by the members of the MA Phone and Social Media Free Schools Coalition for purposes of advocating for this specific cause.

Submit

Clear form

Never submit passwords through Google Forms.

This form was created inside of Becca Schmill Foundation.  
Does this form look suspicious? [Report](#)

Google Forms

