



**CONTACT: Lynda Jackson
774-212-0286**

**Statement by Lora Pellegrini, President and CEO of the Massachusetts Association of Health Plans, on House Bill 1143/Senate Bill 649, An Act relative to fair access for qualifying patients
*November 9, 2021***

“House bill 1143 and Senate Bill 649 establish that a health care provider that issues certifications for medical use of marijuana may be eligible for reimbursement for the certification by qualified health plans, and further establishes that health plans may include cannabis for medical use in their formulary, subject to its inclusion on Schedule II-VI of the Drug Control Program within DPH. Currently, health plans provide coverage for one cannabis-derived drug product, Epidiolex, and three synthetic cannabis-related drug products, Marinol, Syndros, and Cesamet, which are drugs containing a purified form of the drug substance cannabidiol (CBD) for the treatment of seizures, nausea, and anorexia. Currently, medical marijuana does not have FDA approval. The FDA plays an important role in supporting scientific research on various drugs to assess their medical efficacy, the appropriate dosage, determine the best route of administration, and test for possible drug interactions. Because medical marijuana is not yet FDA approved, Massachusetts health plans do not offer coverage.”

####