



11 Beacon Street, Suite 710
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www.cobth.org

December 4, 2020

Submitted electronically via publicengagement@mbta.com.

Steve Poftak, General Manager
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority
10 Park Plaza
Suite 5610
Boston, MA 02116

RE: “Forging Ahead” MBTA Service Delivery Decisions

Dear General Manager Poftak:

The Conference of Boston Teaching Hospitals (COBTH), on behalf of our 12 member hospitals, appreciates the opportunity to comment on forthcoming decisions by the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) regarding potential service cuts. During these challenging times, we recognize the need for the MBTA to evaluate the services it provides, current ridership, and the reality of the current fiscal constraints.

As academic medical centers and teaching hospitals, COBTH’s members serve patients and employ residents in the communities in which we are located, as well as those from communities that are further away. Both our patients and our employees rely on the MBTA’s subway, bus, and commuter rail service to get to and from our hospitals. While we acknowledge the challenges the COVID-19 pandemic has presented for the MBTA, it has never been more critical for our patients and our essential employees to be able to safely and reliably access our member hospitals. We are deeply concerned that service cuts could result in limited access to critical health care services, as well as reduce staff ability to travel to our sites to provide support to our operations.

This is an incredibly challenging time for Boston, for the Commonwealth, and for our country, but given all the challenges we are all facing, it is critical to consider the overarching health equity implications of any potential MBTA service cuts. Bostonians living in lower income neighborhoods and communities of color are especially reliant on the MBTA to provide them with safe and reliable access to their jobs as essential workers, to lifesaving health care services, and more. We ask that you strongly consider the racial and ethnic health equity-related consequences of any potential service cuts and urge you to prioritize the preservation of access to public transportation for low-income communities and communities of color. As you know, these communities have already been the hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic and should not be further penalized in response to the economic hardship we are all collectively facing.



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We thank you for your consideration of our comments and appreciate this opportunity, especially during this difficult time. Please do not hesitate to be in touch with any questions or if we can provide additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Patricia McMullin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "P" and "M".

Patricia McMullin
Executive Director
Conference of Boston Teaching Hospitals