

**August 26, 2020**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**MEDIA CONTACT:** Valerie Hart, [vhart@masscompetes.org](mailto:vhart@masscompetes.org)

## **Survey Finds Long-Term Impacts of COVID on Massachusetts's Business Landscape**

### **Over 100 Massachusetts-based Companies Reflect Employer Sentiments Amid Pandemic**

Boston, MA – Nearly 80% of employees are expected to still be working from home come Labor Day, according to a result of a survey conducted by the Massachusetts Competitive Partnership (MACP) and its business association collaborators.

“Putnam has been incredibly successful at transitioning to a virtually 100% work from home model,” said Robert Reynolds, CEO of Putnam Investments. “We continue to provide a high quality of service to our clients and are happy that our overall productivity means that we can continue to be patient when it comes to thinking about coming back into the office.”

Reynolds, whose Putnam Investments is headquartered in Boston's Financial District, is the Chair of MACP and has leadership positions with the Massachusetts High Tech Council (MHTC) and the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce (GBCC). Those organizations, as well as the Mass Technology Leadership Council (MassTLC), Massachusetts Business Roundtable (MBR), Massachusetts Biology Council (MassBIO), and Middlesex 3 Coalition, today released the results of an employer survey focused on the business community's practices, policies, and sentiments in response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

The survey was conducted from August 3<sup>rd</sup> to August 14<sup>th</sup> of 2020, with 106 companies representing 127,229 employees in Massachusetts participating. The majority of the surveyed employers, 51%, are headquartered in the Boston/Cambridge area, with another 44% located in suburban areas within 495, and 5% outside of 495. The survey covered employer practices related to work-from-home policies, factors contributing to return to work policies and concerns about employee productivity, testing, and longer-term considerations businesses are facing.

“There is no playbook for navigating the economic response to a global pandemic,” remarked MassTLC CEO Tom Hopcroft. “The findings of this executive survey provide critical insights for policymakers and business leaders working to chart a course for the Massachusetts economy and overall wellbeing of our citizens.”

#### **Other key findings regarding work-from-home:**

- 40% of companies, representing over 17,000 employees, report that they are operating 100% remotely.

- 66% of the companies surveyed, representing over 75,000 employees, report that 90% or more of *all* their employees are currently working remotely.
- 92% of companies report over 50% of *all* employees are currently working from home.
- 98% of employees who *can* work from home are currently working from home.

The survey found that the number of employees working remotely increased from 18% pre-COVID to 82% currently. Employers estimate that 47% of their workforce will continue to work remotely after a treatment for COVID-19 has been developed, over twice the number of employees than before the pandemic. Employers went on to report that 79% of their workforce will work remotely come Labor Day, and 61% are anticipated to still be working from home at the start of 2021.

“Since the early days of the pandemic, Zipcar’s first priority has been the safety of our employees and ensuring maximum flexibility to enable successful and productive work,” remarked Zipcar President Tracey Zhen. “In March, our teams made a seamless transition to remote work. Moving forward, our vision is to continue to serve all our employees, resource our teams across Boston and North America, all while continuing to support our special Zipcar culture. We look forward to being a resource for other companies and policymakers as we traverse the changing landscape.”

### **Factors Contributing to Return to Workplace Policies & Employee Productivity**

The survey confirms there has been a cautious return to the workplace across all sectors. While the majority of employers, 84%, are satisfied with the current reopening guidelines provided by the State, there are many factors contributing to how and when employers will bring employees back. The top three factors are the availability of a treatment (44%), employee sentiment (44%), and a decline in reported infection rates (40%). A close fourth is waiting for schools to physically reopen (38%). Both childcare and the return to in-person K-12 learning were major factors as employers look to support employees’ at-home productivity – 87% of respondents noted they were concerned about either childcare or K-12 reopening, or both.

“Our members have consistently expressed the importance of safe, affordable, and equitable access to childcare as a major barrier to employees returning to work”, said JD Chesloff, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Business Roundtable. “We will continue to prioritize supporting employers, employees and policymakers in their efforts to address the ongoing childcare challenges we are facing, and, of course, want to make sure children and families have access to high quality childcare.”

### **Testing**

Eighty-six percent of employers are not currently testing, and a significant number would like to know more about testing. A total of 14% of companies surveyed are currently testing, with half of those companies being interested in learning more

## Longer-term Considerations

When asked whether companies are considering moving or allowing more work to be done out-of-state, 60% of respondents answered in the affirmative. Additionally, 54% of employers said they are considering reducing their office space footprint in Massachusetts. Only, 8% reported considering moving a portion of its urban office space to a more suburban location.

“These are sobering numbers for Massachusetts and its economy”, said Jay Ash, President and CEO of MACP and a former state economic development secretary. “Employers and the talent they attract are the bedrock of Massachusetts’s competitiveness. The pandemic will have a lasting impact on how people work; our hope is that these survey results inform not only business leaders, but policymakers alike, as they think about economic recovery and the challenges and competition we face for jobs and the tax revenues they produce.”

**About MACP** The Massachusetts Competitive Partnership is a non-profit, non-partisan, 501(c)(4) public policy group comprised of chief executive officers from 15 of the Commonwealth's largest businesses. MACP’s mission is to promote job stabilization and growth across the full spectrum of business, and within all geographic regions of the Commonwealth.

