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New leadership presents new opportunities for public health in Massachusetts. The Patrick administration appointed highly-regarded health professionals to leadership positions, making science-based public health a policy and budget priority.

As a result we have greater expectations for what we can achieve. The Massachusetts Public Health Association (MPHA) is rising to the challenge, combining cutting edge Internet activism with time-honored community organizing to strengthen the voice for public health. We’re successfully using the media to raise the profile of our organization and issues. MPHA’s leadership role in coalitions is helping to strengthen support for public health on Beacon Hill.

This translates into better policies and programs to protect the health of our communities, workplaces, and environment. Because of our work this past year, thousands of children will receive new vaccines, more restaurants and schools will be inspected, and communities are better preparing for disaster. With continued support from our members, our greatest victories lie ahead of us.

MPHA’s key accomplishments this year include:

- Led advocacy to boost Department of Public Health funding by $74.4 million, including major new funding for immunizations and environmental health;
- Spearheaded a statewide legislative campaign to get junk food and sugary drinks out of schools and led organizing to win a strong school health policy in Framingham;
- Helped lead the Alliance for a Healthy Tomorrow, a broad coalition championing policies to promote safer alternatives to toxic chemicals;
- Played leadership roles in initiatives to create a regional structure for public health and to promote workforce development for Community Health Workers;
- Organized a statewide series of forums on emergency preparedness for vulnerable populations.

**MPHA FUNDERS**

**ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERS**

Arbors at Chicopee & Westfield
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts
Boston University School of Social Work
Channing-Bete Company
Community Catalyst
Fallon Community Health Plan
Health Care for All
Health Law Advocates
Holyoke Health Center
Justice Resource Institute
LUK, Inc.
MA Assoc. of Community Health Workers
MA Coalition of School-Based Health Centers
MA College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences
MA Podiatric Medical Society

**INSTITUTIONAL & CORPORATE PARTNERS**

I199SEIU United Healthcare Workers
Abt Associates
American Cancer Society
Audrey Shelto Consulting
Beacon Health Strategies
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts
Boston Public Health Commission
Bouvé College of Health Sciences at Northeastern University
Boston University School of Public Health
Cambridge Health Alliance
Children’s Hospital Boston
The Connors Family
Dana-Farber Cancer Institute
DorWell
E. Catlin Donnelly Associates
Friends of Brookline Public Health
GeoVision
Gravestar Foundation
Great Brook Valley Health Center
Harvard Pilgrim HealthCare
Harvard School of Public Health
The Health Foundation of Central Mass
Hill Holliday

**GRANT & CONTRACT SUPPORT**

ABCD/SkillWorks
Alliance for a Healthy Tomorrow
The Boston Foundation
Boston Public Health Commission
Common Stream Foundation
Department of Public Health

Patrick-Murray Inaugural Committee
Harvard School of Public Health
Holyoke Health Center
Metro West Community Foundation
Tufts Medical School

MA School Nurses Organization
MA League of Community Health Centers
MA Podiatric Medical Society
MA School Nurse Organization
MIRA Coalition
Northeast Ctrr. for Healthy Communities
Norton Board of Health
Somerville Health Department
The Arbors at Chicopee
The Arbors at Westfield
The Beer Companies
Tobacco Free Mass
Town of Norton - Board of Health
Trust for America's Health
UMass Amherst Bahai Club
Western MA Ctrr. for Healthy Communities

Hinckley, Allen & Tringale
John Snow, Inc.
MAP for Health
MA Hospital Association
MA League of Community Health Centers
MA Medical Society
MA Nurses Association
MassPro
The Medical Foundation
MetroWest Community Health Care Fnd.
Mintz-Levin
Neighborhood Health Plan
The Oral Health Foundation
Partners HealthCare
Philip W. Johnston Associates
Planned Parenthood League of Massachusetts
Rasky-Baerlein Strategic Communications, Inc.
Ropes & Gray
Senior Whole Health
Small Business Service Bureau, Inc.
Rosenfeld & Rafik
Tufts University School of Medicine
Tufts-New England Medical Center
UMass Memorial HealthCare
**MPHA STAFF & INTERNS**

Geoff Wilkinson  
Executive Director

AJ Juarez  
Community Organizer, Western MA

Sara Kanevsky  
Community Organizer, Central MA

Kara Keenan  
Membership and Development Coordinator

Terry Mason  
Deputy Director for Program and Policy

Drita Protopapa  
Community Organizer, Framingham

Wanda Santiago  
Business Manager

Maya Scott  
Administrative Assistant

Eric Weltman  
Deputy Director of Policy and Advocacy

Sonia Alam  
Intern

Rebekah Gowler  
Intern

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**FORMER STAFF AND INTERNS**

Roberta Friedman, Director of Education

Greer Harewood, Administrative Assistant and Framingham Community Organizer

Marco Cornelio, Tufts University School of Medicine

Nicole Charon, Boston University

Melody Hugo, Boston University School of Social Work

Thea Ivester, Boston University

Lia Krautmanis, Boston College

Angela Maina, Boston University School of Social Work

Javeria Mir, UMass School Public Health

Jonah Molberg, Smith College

Christine Morrow, Tufts University School of Medicine

Rossanna Salazar, Mount Holyoke

Sarah Schufreider, College of the Holy Cross

Juan White, High School of Science and Technology, Springfield

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**BUDGET VICTORIES**

In a tight fiscal year, MPHA and our allies won important increases for disease prevention and health promotion in the state budget.

The Fiscal Year 2008 budget contains $548.7 million for the Department of Public Health (DPH). Legislators approved $74.4 million (16 percent) more for DPH compared to FY07, including major increases for immunizations, smoking prevention, and early intervention services. Because DPH received over $40 million in supplemental appropriations for FY07, the actual increase in total available funding approved for public health in FY08 was $31.6 million (6 percent).

MPHA helped lead advocacy to win a $12 million boost in the Universal Immunization program, including funding for the new rotavirus and HCV pediatric vaccines. We made Environmental Health Services a high budget priority for the first time, resulting in $500,000 in targeted new funding for food safety and indoor air quality inspections. MPHA led successful advocacy for the state laboratory and helped lead coalitions for school health services and hepatitis C. We also supported the work of partner organizations to boost funding for tobacco control, teen pregnancy prevention, youth violence prevention, suicide prevention, substance abuse, and other family and community health programs.

MPHA provided a steady stream of budget information and timely action alerts to members and allied organizations, testified at hearings, and held scores of meetings with public officials. Our organizers recruited people to write, call, and meet with their elected leaders. We combined grassroots organizing with effective press work and the use of new, Internet-based tools. We also played leading roles in several coalitions and joined a broad array of organizations in supporting the governor’s proposals to increase corporate and local options revenues.
MPHA’s campaign to prevent childhood obesity is gaining visibility and strength. MPHA is the lead organization promoting legislation to prohibit the sale of junk food and sugary drinks in schools. “An Act to Promote Proper School Nutrition” has been approved by the Public Health Committee, and is currently under consideration by the Health Care Financing Committee of the legislature.

In the past year, we’ve generated dozens of letters, op-ed pieces, and news stories, garnered over 80 organizational endorsements, and mobilized hundreds of people to sign postcards in support of the bill. In May, we organized a successful State House media event, featuring DPH Commissioner John Auerbach, followed by a public hearing including testimony from nurses, doctors, and school officials. MPHA is also taking the campaign to the local level. MPHA has launched an obesity prevention initiative in Framingham, and in April we won passage by the school committee of a wellness policy promoting nutrition education, increased physical education, and higher standards for foods and beverages. In May we celebrated the grand opening of a greenhouse at the Sullivan Elementary School in Holyoke. The greenhouse is a project of MPHA, along with WGBY television, the Holyoke public schools, and the Holyoke YMCA, and will include a curriculum to teach basic math, botany, and nutrition.

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Officers**

- **Harold Cox**, MSSW, President
  Boston University School of Public Health

- **Bettye Anderson Frederic**, BSN, MS, Vice President
  Springfield Department of Health & Human Services

- **Ed Marakovitz**, MSW, Secretary/Treasurer
  Boston College School of Social Work

- **Judith Kurland**, Past President
  City of Boston

**Directors**

- **Myron Allukian**, DDS, MPH
  Boston Public Health Commission (Retired)

- **Ray Considine**, MSW
  The Medical Foundation

- **Alba Cruz Davis**, PhD, MPH
  Dana Farber Cancer Institute

- **Alfred DeMaria, Jr.**, MD
  MA Department of Public Health

- **Durrell Fox**
  NE AIDS Education and Training Center

- **Ruth Ellen Fitch**, JD
  Dimock Community Health Center

- **Charles Levenstein**, PhD, MSOH
  UMass Lowell (Emeritus)

- **Robin Klar**, DNSc, RN
  UMass Medical School

- **Angela Mah**
  United Commercial Bank

- **Mónica Escobar Lowell**
  UMass Memorial Health Care

- **Alba Cruz Davis**, PhD, MPH
  Dana Farber Cancer Institute

- **Wendy K. Mariner**, JD, MPH
  Boston University School of Public Health

- **Arthur Mazer**, MPH
  Dept of Health and Human Services (Retired)

- **Vivien Morris**, MPH, MS, RD
  Boston Medical Center

- **Frank Singleton**, MSPH, MPA
  Lowell Health Department

- **Karen van Unen**
  MBA, Med
  Dotwell, Inc.
ness, and attracted over 250 people. In April, nearly 300 people joined us in honoring three public health pioneers, Matt Fishman, Zoila Torres Feldman, and Ali Noorani.

Other events over the past year include:

- Forums last fall on emergency preparedness for vulnerable populations held in Somerville, Worcester, Springfield, and Hadley;
- A public hearing last fall on universal health care, co-sponsored by MPHA and chaired by Congressman John Olver, held in Holyoke;
- A reception at the APHA annual meeting, where we honored then-Senate President Robert Travaglini and House Speaker Salvatore DiMasi;
- A budget briefing in February by Noah Berger, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center;
- A reception in April welcoming Dr. JudyAnn Bigby, Secretary of Health and Human Services, and John Auerbach, Commissioner of Public Health;
- The 18th annual Western Massachusetts Elder Care Conference held in May in Springfield, attended by over 325 people;
- A book reading in November by Michele Simon, author of *Appetite for Profit: How the Food Industry Undermines Our Health and How to Fight Back*;
- A forum on substance abuse, co-sponsored by MPHA, held in September in Springfield, featuring a keynote by Michael Dukakis;
- Forums organized by MPHA’s Environmental and Occupational Health Section on urban environmental problems, biomonitoring, and immigrant worker health and safety.

MPHA is tackling environmental and occupational health issues on several fronts. We’re playing a leadership role in the Alliance for a Healthy Tomorrow, a broad coalition of health, labor, religious, and environmental organizations focused on preventing exposure to toxic chemicals in consumer products, workplaces, and the environment. Last year, AHT scored a strong victory in passing the Mercury Products Bill.

This year, AHT’s legislative priority is the Safer Alternatives Bill, which establishes a program to replace priority toxic chemicals with safer alternatives wherever available. Over half of the legislature is co-sponsoring the bill. At a Mother’s Day State House event, the coalition delivered 25,000 postcards to Governor Patrick and legislators, urging passage of the bill.

MPHA also co-chairs AHT’s Administrative Action Committee, and has been working closely with the Patrick administration on an executive order to promote government purchasing of less-toxic products and services.

MPHA’s Environmental and Occupational Health section has been playing an important role in policy, public education, and coalition work. At a State House hearing in July, three section members testified in support of three bills concerning particulate matter, indoor air quality in schools, and environmental justice. The section has also been bringing together colleague organizations and MPHA members to discuss issues of common concern at quarterly meetings. Topics over the past year include immigrant worker health and safety, biomonitoring, and urban environmental issues.

MPHA has also been active in local environmental health initiatives. We’re part of a coalition that’s piloting Integrated Pest Management (IPM), a preventative approach to reducing both pests and pesticides, in targeted Boston public housing projects. The Healthy Pest Free Housing Initiative has employed and trained community health advocates who are helping residents prepare for
services by IPM contractors hired by the Boston Housing Authority. In western Massachusetts, MPHA helped launch the Pioneer Valley Community Environmental Health Coalition, an environmental justice coalition that is currently exploring brownfields testing in Holyoke.

MPHA is deeply involved in a project to develop a sustainable, regional public health system in Massachusetts. Massachusetts is one of the few states in the nation without a county health system. The objective of the project is to create a regional infrastructure to provide equitable protection and health promotion for all residents, while respecting the existing legal authority of health boards and creating incentives for local participation.

The effort, led by MPHA president Harold Cox, under the auspices of the Boston University School of Public Health, involves local public health officials, academics, representatives of the departments of public health and environmental protection, and legislative supporters. It has included intensive research and several large stakeholder meetings, and its tentative findings were the subject of a legislative hearing last fall. Members of the project “work group,” which includes Cox, MPHA board member Frank Singleton, and executive director Geoff Wilkinson, made nearly two dozen presentations to local public health officials, state leaders, and community members across the state this spring. The feedback from these sessions will be incorporated into proposed legislation.

PANDEMIC FLU PREPARATION
Last fall, MPHA held four successful forums on emergency preparedness for vulnerable populations. More than 300 people attended the forums in Somerville, Worcester, and Springfield and Hadley. The forums provided attendees with information about pandemic flu and resources for preparing for disaster. More importantly, they provided an opportunity to identify the needs of particular communities and discuss how to plan and prepare for vulnerable populations. The diversity of the attendees was a major indicator of the forums’ success, with the

MPHA EVENTS
Across Massachusetts, MPHA organizes conferences, forums, and other events that bring people together, provide inspiration and ideas, support professional development, and strengthen the statewide voice for public health.

MPHA’s two signature events are our fall Annual Meeting and our Spring Celebration. The 2006 annual meeting focused on pandemic flu prepared-
In addition, MPHA organized and co-sponsored several well-attended forums in western Massachusetts, covering topics such as emergency preparedness, regionalization, and substance abuse.

METROWEST is a new addition to our regional organizing, with a focus on preventing childhood obesity. MPHA’s part-time organizer undertook a successful effort to rebuild Framingham’s Health Advisory Council. The Council’s advocacy resulted in the school committee passing a wellness policy promoting nutrition education, increased opportunities for physical activity, and higher standards for foods and beverages.

MPHA is harnessing both mainstream media and web-based tools to educate the public, engage our members, and mobilize action.

In November, MPHA launched a newly-designed and upgraded web site, www.MPHAweb.org. The new site contains information about our current issue concerns and ways to get involved, as well as resources such as a calendar and job listings. More importantly, the site features interactive tools allowing visitors to sign up for our email alerts, make a contribution and join MPHA, and easily email their legislators on policy priorities.

MPHA is also maintaining a strong presence in newspapers across the state, as well as on television and radio. We’ve published dozens of letters-to-the-editor and op-ed pieces in the major dailies and local weeklies. And we’ve staged successful media events at the State House, attracting television cameras with engaging visuals, such as toxic-containing toys and bales of soda bottles.

WORKING IN COALITION

As the “umbrella organization” for public health in Massachusetts, coalition work is key to MPHA’s successes. We lead, support, and participate in a number of coalitions, including:

- MPHA is a lead member of the Alliance for a Healthy Tomorrow, a broad health, labor, religious, and environmental coalition promoting community health workers (CHWs) help underserved communities gain access to health information and care through their understanding of both worlds. Although CHWs have become an important part of the health care system, compensation and recognition for their work remain woefully inadequate. This year MPHA’s long-standing support for the efforts of Community Health Workers to gain professional security and opportunity picked up steam.

In addition, the theme of MPHA’s 2006 annual meeting was “Pandemic Flu: Learning from the Past, Preparing for the Future.” The keynote address was by Dr. Alfred W. Crosby, author of America’s Forgotten Pandemic: The Influenza of 1918, and was followed by a response panel including then-DPH Commissioner Paul Cote; David Cohen, Mayor of Newton; Stacey DeBoise Luster, Director of HR for the Worcester Public Schools; and Dan Murphy of Mass Mutual Life Insurance.

PROMOTING HEALTH ACCESS AND REDUCING DISPARITIES

Members of the COWNT Coalition with Commissioner John Auerbach at the MACHW annual meeting

MPHA Board President Harold Cox is interviewed about the school nutrition bill

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MPHA began conducting policy research and development as part of the Community Health Worker Initiative of Boston. MPHA is an Initiative partner and MPHA staff co-chair the Policy Development Committee. In April 2007 the Initiative received approval from SkillWorks for a three year workforce development project, funded by a consortium of foundations.

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MPHA staff is also working with DPH and Commissioner John Auerbach’s Community Health Worker Advisory Council in preparation for a report to the legislature on the effectiveness of CHW’s in improving access and reducing disparities. The Advisory Council and report were both mandated as part of the Health Care Reform Act, in acknowledgment of the important role of CHWs.
MPHA’s commitment to diversifying and strengthening the organized constituency for public health has been crucial to our accomplishments. With full-time organizers in central and western Massachusetts, joined by a part-time organizer in Framingham, we’ve developed new leadership, identified fresh allies, and engaged a broad range of people in our issue priorities.

In Western Massachusetts, MPHA and the Springfield Department of Health and Human Services co-lead the COWNT (Community Outreach Workers Network and Training) coalition. This year COWNT became an affiliate of the Massachusetts Community Health Workers Association (MACHW), for which MPHA remains the fiscal agent.

On August 8, the Commission to End Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities issued its final report calling for a comprehensive approach to ending disparities. Established by law in 2004, the Commission was led by Representative Peter Koutoujian and Senator Dianne Wilkerson. Three MPHA Board members were on the Commission—Harold Cox, then Board President John Auerbach, and Bettye Anderson Frederic (representing Helen Caulton-Harris). MPHA staff Greer Harwood testified at the health disparities hearing held before the Legislature’s Joint Committee on Public Health in May of 2007. MPHA Board member Wendy Mariner continues to represent the organization on the Steering Committee of the Affordable Care Today (ACT!) coalition to assure that health care remains affordable for the lowest income residents of the state. She also represents MPHA on the Mass Health Care Quality and Cost Council advisory committee.

In Western Massachusetts, coalition building as well as public education events have strengthened MPHA’s community ties while fueling strong policy advocacy on school nutrition, the budget, and environmental health. The year’s highlight was the grand re-opening of the greenhouse at Holyoke’s Sullivan School, a project of MPHA, WGBY, the YMCA, and the Holyoke public schools. The re-opening event featured music by the Sullivan School Jazz Band, led by local Latin jazz luminary and school music teacher Jose Gonzalez. Next steps include planting an “edible garden” and developing a curriculum to teach basic math, botany, and nutrition.

MPHA also played key roles in community health workers and environmental justice coalitions. We helped launch the Pioneer Valley Community Environmental Health Coalition, which is currently exploring brownfields testing in Holyoke. And the Community Outreach Workers Network and Training (COWNT) Coalition trained over 130 CHWs in advocacy and health issues, while becoming an affiliate of the Massachusetts Association of Community Health Workers (MACHW).