

# The Massachusetts Public Health Association

## *Working for public health means working for social justice*

Annual Report, October 2003-September 2004

Below you will find a summary of MPHA's achievements from the past year. We thank our members, partners, funders, elected officials and others for your outstanding support!

### 1 Public Health Budget Advocacy

Over three years, from FY01 to FY04, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) budget was cut by \$158 million, more than 1/3 of its core operating budget. Last January, Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney proposed cutting DPH by another \$31 million. He wanted to eliminate funding for school health services, community health centers, and prostate cancer prevention. He also wanted to dramatically reduce funding for AIDS prevention and treatment, substance abuse services, and teen pregnancy prevention. Romney's draft budget even called for cutting state immunization programs by over 1/2, which could have resulted in the elimination of all publicly funded adult vaccines, including flu shots for seniors.



MPHA responded with the most intense advocacy campaign in our history. We engaged our members and coalition partners in every stage of the budget process, providing detailed budget analyses, legislative updates, and action alerts to influence budget making by the House, Senate, conference committee, and governor. We organized State House rallies and letter and phone call campaigns. We provided leadership to three major coalitions, and we participated in others.

We engaged in aggressive and effective media advocacy that resulted in significantly more coverage of public health issues and increased visibility for MPHA.

With new, full time MPHA community organizers in western, central, and northeastern Massachusetts, we were able to organize district meetings with legislators all across the state. We developed an advocacy manual and provided trainings for public health

providers and community health workers. The public health community started to act as an organized, statewide force. It was just a start, and it wasn't sufficient to fully reverse the damage of the past three years, but when the dust had settled, the **FY05 DPH budget included \$35 million more than in FY04, a reversal of over \$65 million from the governor's proposal.** MPHA played a leadership role in winning increased or restored funding for adult immunizations, school health services, substance abuse services, and 48 full time DPH program positions that had been slated for elimination. We played significant support roles in winning increased funding for family planning and rape crisis services, tobacco control programs, teen pregnancy prevention, prostate cancer prevention, AIDS services, and environmental health programs.

## 2 Childhood Healthy Weight Campaign

In late 2002, MPHA received major funding for a project linking grassroots organizing with school-based nutrition education in three regions of Massachusetts in partnership with FoodPlay, a western Massachusetts-based children's theatre group.



Over the past year, over 21,000 children in more than 70 school districts have participated in the program, and our regional organizers have started to build committees in key districts to involve parents and school personnel in action for both local and statewide policy change.

MPHA's education director is one of the state's leading advocates on childhood obesity prevention. She helped to draft new nutrition standards that were recently adopted by the Boston School Committee in a nationally significant move to ban soda and improve food in all Boston public schools. The regulations can provide a blueprint for other school districts, and we believe that a series of such victories will help build momentum for winning statewide school nutrition legislation.

As part of the implementation of MPHA's strategic plan, we have started to revive several of the professional sections into which our membership is organized. Chairs of the child and adolescent health, food and nutrition, and health promotion and prevention sections are cooperating to organize a series of carnival-like nutrition forums beginning this fall that will be integrated with the FoodPlay project organizing and related policy work.

## 3 Issue Campaigns & Public Health Legislation

### Environmental Health

MPHA increased its participation and leadership in the Alliance for a Healthy Tomorrow (AHT), a broad-based coalition working to promote safe alternatives to toxics found in the home and workplace. Since last fall, MPHA has co-chaired AHT's committee to develop an executive order which would require DPH and other state agencies to use all existing legal authority to protect the public from products containing chemicals known to cause cancers, neurological, reproductive, or endocrine disorders. The public campaign for the executive order will be launched this fall. MPHA is also organizing its 2004 annual meeting around the theme of environmental health. Our speakers will be Shelley Hearne, executive director of the Trust for America's Health, and Virginia Caine, President of the American Public Health Association.

### Health Care Access

MPHA's mission includes promoting health care as a human right. Over the past year, we actively supported a campaign to pass a state constitutional amendment guaranteeing health care for all. The question was endorsed in a recent constitutional convention and will advance in the political process for further action next year. We also supported single payer health care reform, prescription fair pricing legislation, and health care access for immigrants, and we:



- Organized a major State House rally in cooperation with coalition partners last April, where 300 people turned out despite rain to link health care and public health and to demand strong funding for both.

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## MPHA's Statewide Leadership

### MPHA Board of Directors, 2003-2004

#### Executive Committee

**Harold Cox**, MSSW - President

**Judith Kurland** - Vice President

**Betty Anderson Fredric**, BSN, MSN - Vice President,  
Western Mass

**Ali Noorani**, MPH - Secretary

**Ed Marakovitz**, MSW - Treasurer

**Chris Hager**, JD, MPH - Past President

#### Section Chairs & Delegates

**Myron Allukian**, DDS, MPH - Oral Health

**Alba Cruz**, PhD, MPH - Minority Health

**Alfred DeMaria, Jr.**, MD - Epidemiology & Lab Sciences

**Marcie Freeman**, MEd - Gerontology

**Donna Lazorik**, RN, MS - Public Health Nursing

**Arthur Mazer**, MPH - Mass. Human Services Coalition

**Vivien Morris**, MPH, MS, RD - Food & Nutrition

**Jacqueline Nolan**, MPH - Women's Health

**Dorothy Swope** - Health Promotion & Prevention

**Karen van Unen**, MBA, MEd - Child & Adolescent Health

**Deborah Klein Walker**, EdD - APHA & Health Planning  
& Policy

#### Members at Large

**Thomas Conklin**, MD, FAPA, CCHP

**Ray Considine**, MSW

**Catherine DeLorey**, DrPh

**Frank Singleton**, MSPH, MPA

**Judith Gorbach**, EdM, MPH

**Wendy Mariner**, JD, MPH

#### Former Members, 2003-2004

**Anthony Schlaff**, MD, MPH

**Carlos Joo**, DMD

**Mindy Luber**, JD

**Barbara Ferrer**, PhD

#### MPHA Staff, 2003-2004

**Geoffrey W. Wilkinson**, Executive Director

**Roberta Friedman**, Director of Education

**Sarah Almer**, Deputy Director of Advocacy & Policy

**Libby Manly**, Membership & Development Coordinator

**Guilmo Barrio**, Community Organizer, Merrimack Valley

**A.J. Juarez**, Community Organizer, Western Mass

**Lisa Renee Siciliano**, Community Organizer, Central Mass

**Stan Holt**, Organizing Consultant

**Wanda Santiago**, Business Manager

**Fred Rosenfeld**, Administrative Assistant

#### MPHA Student Interns

**Amanda Behrens**, Communications Intern

**Dana Bowie**, Correctional Health Intern

**Catherine DeFuria**, Child Health Intern

**Mary Ann Fitzgerald**, Advocacy & Special Events Intern

**Rhiannon Morton**, Advocacy Intern

**Michael Wake**, Hep C Coalition & Advocacy Intern

#### Former Staff & Interns

**Victoria Brower**, Advocacy Intern

**Andrea Cooper**, Advocacy Intern

**Amy Desrosiers**, Research Intern

**Amy Eiferman**, Hep C Coalition and Advocacy Intern

**Lise Hildebrandt**, Child Health Intern

**Samatha Panati**, Child Health Intern

**Maddie Ribble**, Advocacy Intern

**Amanda Rieger**, Development Intern

**Tobi Quinto**, Director of Advocacy & Policy

**Ryan Tappin**, Research & Communications Intern

**Chris Wilson**, Research & Advocacy Intern

#### MPHA Offices

**Boston:** 434 Jamaica Way, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130

(617) 524-6696 • fax: (617) 524-5225 • [mpha@mphaweb.org](mailto:mpha@mphaweb.org)

**Lowell:** 341 Pine Street, Lowell, MA 01851

(978) 328-2705 • [guilmob@hotmail.com](mailto:guilmob@hotmail.com)

**Springfield:** 95 State Street, Springfield, MA 01103

(413) 750-2060 • [ellis6065@charter.net](mailto:ellis6065@charter.net)

**Worcester:** 4 Lancaster Terrace, Worcester, MA 01609

(508) 791-5893 • [Lrsiciliano@aol.com](mailto:Lrsiciliano@aol.com)



## **MPHA's Funders**

### **Grant and Contract Support**

Alliance for a Healthy Tomorrow  
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation  
Boston Foundation  
Common Stream Foundation  
Estate of John T. O'Connor  
Ellis & Rapacki, LLP  
Jessie B. Cox Charitable Trust  
Massachusetts Department of Public Health  
Roache Pharmaceuticals  
Partners Health Care  
Tufts University School of Medicine

### **MPHA Partners in Public Health**

Alexander Aronson Finning  
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts  
Boston Public Health Commission  
Boston University School of Public Health  
Cambridge Health Alliance  
Harvard School of Public Health  
Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts  
Massachusetts Medical Society  
Partners Health Care  
Tufts University School of Medicine,  
Graduate Programs in Public Health

### **MPHA Organizational Members**

Boxborough Board of Health  
Central MA Center for Healthy Communities  
Central MA Area Health Education Center  
Children's Hospital Boston  
Everett Health Department  
Friends of Brookline Public Health  
Grafton Board of Health  
Health Care of Southeastern Mass, Inc  
Health Law Advocates  
Highland Valley Elder Services  
Justice Resource Institute  
Massachusetts Association of Community Health  
Massachusetts Coalition of Community Hospitals  
Massachusetts Health Data Consortium  
Massachusetts Community Health Worker Network  
Massachusetts Dental Hygienists Association  
Massachusetts Health Council, Inc.  
Massachusetts Nurses Association

### **Organizational Members continued..**

Partners for a Healthier Community  
Planned Parenthood League of Massachusetts  
Saugus Board of Health  
Span, Inc.  
Tobacco Free Mass  
WestMass Elder Care  
Wyeth-Ayerst Labs

### **Institutional and Corporate Donors**

Action for Boston Community Development  
American Cancer Society  
Beacon Capital Partners  
Boston University School of Dental Medicine  
Boston University School of Medicine  
Brigham & Women's Hospital  
Byte Machines and Engineering  
Cambridge Cares About AIDS  
Central Boston Elder Services  
Dana Farber Cancer Institute  
Erna Yaffe Foundation  
Fleet Bank  
Friends of Brookline Public Health  
GlaxoSmithKline  
Gravestar, Inc.  
Harvard Pilgrim Health Care  
Hebrew Rehabilitation Center for Aged  
Highland Valley Elder Services  
John Hancock Financial Services  
Lyme Properties  
The Karp Family Foundation  
Massachusetts General Hospital  
MassPro  
NEU Institute on Urban Health Research  
Rasky/Baerlein Group, Inc  
Partners Health Care  
Policy Studies, Inc.  
PriceWaterhouseCoopers  
RF Walsh & Company  
Rosenfeld & Rafik  
Seaport  
Shawmut Design & Construction Company  
Suffolk Construction  
Tishman Speyer Properties  
Tufts Health Plan  
Tufts - New England Medical Center  
Whittier Street Health Center  
William A. Berry & Son  
Winn Development Company and Cassin Group

## Issue Campaigns & Public Health Legislation continued...

- Continued a close collaboration with the Massachusetts Community Health Workers Network (MACHW), a statewide peer support organization involving front line health workers. MPHA and MACHW will be presenting a scientific session on this partnership at the 2004 APHA annual meeting in Washington, DC.
- Participated in planning and helped turn out dozens of public health practitioners for a June 19 “Bridge Walk” in Boston, co-sponsored by Jobs with Justice and SEIU as part of a national day of action to promote health care for all.

### Health Disparities

MPHA worked under contract with Tufts Medical School to involve public health professionals in the Health Careers Opportunity Program (HCOP), which seeks to inspire high school students of color to enter the health professions. Over twenty MPHA members agreed to have students “shadow” them at work to get hands-on experience with public health, and other members spoke to groups of HCOP students. MPHA also works to reduce health disparities based on race, ethnicity, gender, class and sexual orientation through our campaigns to improve correctional health, expand hepatitis C services, prevent childhood obesity, promote environmental health, support community health workers, and increase state funding for public health programs that benefit vulnerable populations.



### Correctional Health

A year ago, MPHA finished national dissemination of a report documenting a public health model of improving health care for inmates pioneered at the

Hampden County Correctional Center that was recognized with a national Ford Foundation award. Last October, we released another major report on correctional health care that received front page coverage in the *Boston Globe* and earned MPHA an invitation to testify before a gubernatorial commission developing recommendations to improve the Massachusetts correctional system. We helped draft legislation to extend Medicaid coverage to inmates immediately upon their release from incarceration and the bill was approved by the legislature’s health care committee.

### Strengthening the Public Health Infrastructure

Over the past six months, MPHA has developed a half hour video program, *Safe and Healthy: How Public Health Protects Us*, that will begin airing soon on cable access TV stations across the state. Funded through the Department of Public Health, the video describes a variety of essential local public health services. It was shot on location in communities from the Berkshires to eastern Massachusetts. The project is designed to improve understanding of and support for public health and to increase awareness about emergency preparedness planning.

MPHA provides staffing support for the Coalition for Local Public Health (CLPH), which includes MPHA and associations representing the state’s health boards, health officers, environmental health officials, and public health nurses. The CLPH has significantly influenced management of the state’s federally funded emergency preparedness efforts, including development of a new regional structure for coordinating planning and distribution of resources. The CLPH is also working with state officials to help develop a new education and training institute to support and strengthen the local public health workforce.

### Local Community Organizing

In line with our strategic plan, MPHA is developing community organizing as a core capacity. With full-time community organizers in Lowell, Springfield and Worcester, MPHA has accomplished the following over the past year:

### **Local Community Organizing continued...**

- Organized district-based meetings with public officials across the state to win support for increased public health funding.
- Won an important advocacy victory when the Lawrence City Council passed a resolution to support school health services.
- Launched community exercise clubs with families in western and northeastern Massachusetts.
- Organized MPHA's inaugural Food & Fitness Carnival in central Massachusetts. The Carnival was attended by 130 children and parents who learned about healthy eating and exercise habits through interactive games and workshops.

## **6 Organizational Development**

MPHA has been driven by a clear sense of mission about the importance of integrating community-based organizing with professional advocacy and education. We have maintained and expanded MPHA's role as a coalition leader and the state's "umbrella group" for public health. We have also devoted considerable effort to improving communications with our membership, the press, coalition partners, and advocacy targets. This focus on external results and relationships has been integrated with and made possible by intensive organizational development. Here is a summary of accomplishments related to the internal workings of MPHA over the past year:

- We finished work on MPHA's formal strategic plan last fall after a final draft was presented to the membership at our 2003 annual meeting.
- Individual dues paying membership in MPHA increased by 38 percent over the year.
- We hired new, full time organizers for western and northeastern Massachusetts and opened two new regional offices to compliment the office we opened last year in central Massachusetts.
- We expanded our central offices last September, enabling us to host graduate and undergraduate interns. We operated through most of the year with up to seven interns at a time assisting with various advocacy, education, and research projects.
- We inaugurated a bi-monthly electronic newsletter in March and began extensive improvements to MPHA's website, [www.mphaweb.org](http://www.mphaweb.org), and other communications.
- Our annual meeting last fall featured a keynote by Dr. Georges Benjamin, APHA Executive Director, and drew a 30 percent increase in attendance over the previous year.
- Over 350 people attended our second annual fundraiser this spring, where we raised a net of \$110,000, compared to \$40,000 in 2003.



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