



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Executive Office of Health and Human Services  
Department of Public Health  
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COMMISSIONER

February 17, 2010

Dear Lynn Nicholas,

The emergence of H1N1 flu last April created an unprecedented set of challenges for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the nation -- from the initial uncertainty and widespread anxiety regarding the severity of the associated illnesses, to the prospect of widespread school closings and the shortages of vaccines. Thanks to you and others, in spite of these unpredictable and trying circumstances, extraordinary steps were taken to protect the health of the public and reduce the number of people who developed serious illness and the number who died. The Department of Public Health was proud to work in partnership with many outstanding organizations and individuals, such as yourself, in these efforts.

We believe it is important to acknowledge and honor the work that you and others did in the last 10 months to address the pandemic. Therefore we have decided to award the Massachusetts Hospital Association with a "Public Health Hero" award, to be presented at the H1N1 Summit - "Responding to H1N1 Influenza: Lessons Learned" - on March 22. The MHA was a particularly important partner to DPH with your consistent and accurate communication messages to the hospitals, your assistance with leading the regular conference calls, your independent information and education dissemination and your and your staff's wise and calm leadership through the ups and downs of the outbreak.

We look forward to the opportunity to publicly thank the MHA for all of its work throughout this public health emergency. We hope you and your staff can join us at the award ceremony on March 22<sup>nd</sup> at 12:30 PM at the DCU Center in Worcester, MA.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Auerbach".

John Auerbach  
Commissioner of Public Health