



For Immediate Release  
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Contact: Toni Troop, MPHA Consultant  
T: 617-212-7571, E: [tonitroop@gmail.com](mailto:tonitroop@gmail.com)

## **Massachusetts Public Health Association to bestow awards on four leaders advancing public health in the Commonwealth**

*(Boston, MA):* Today people are likely to think of COVID-19 when hearing the term public health. In truth the range of public health issues - and the people who work diligently every day to safeguard the health of our communities - is vast and deep. From potential new outbreaks of Mpox and health care for the homeless to clean swimming pools and drinking water and services for those suffering from addiction or mental health, public health concerns each and every resident of the Commonwealth.

On Friday, June 2, 2023, the Massachusetts Public Health Association (MPHA) will honor four public health professionals for their critical service, inspiring leadership, and commitment to racial justice at the 21st Annual MPHA Spring Awards Breakfast. The 2023 MPHA Awardees are:

- ★ **Local Public Health Leadership Award:** [Dr. Matilde Castiel](#), Commissioner of Worcester Health and Human Services and President of the Massachusetts Large Cities Health Coalition
- ★ **Paul Revere Award:** [Kevin Cranston](#), Assistant Commissioner, Director of the Bureau of Infectious Disease and Laboratory Sciences at the MA Department of Public Health
- ★ **Emerging Leader/Alfred Frechette Award:** [Tiana Davis](#), Deputy Public Health Commissioner for the City of Springfield.
- ★ **Lemuel Shattuck Award:** [Adrienne “Andy” Epstein](#), Brookline Advisory Council on Public Health

More than 350 people are expected at the sold out to be held at the Artists For Humanity EpiCenter in South Boston. Massachusetts Department of Public Health Commissioner **Dr. Robbie Goldstein** will speak along with President & CEO of Health Resources in Action and MPHA Board President **Steve Ridini** and Executive Director of Harvard and the Legacy of Slavery Initiative and MPHA Board President-Elect **Roeshana Moore-Evans**.

In addition to raising funds to support the advocacy and organizing agenda of MPHA, the breakfast offers an opportunity to recognize those whose daily work is devoted to making local communities and the entire Commonwealth healthier and more equitable.

“At this moment in history, when public health staff in Massachusetts and across the country have faced backlash and even harassment for their work it is more important than ever to celebrate those who have committed themselves to this hard and live-saving work,” stated Carlene Pavlos, Executive Director of MPHA.

**Tiana Davis**, coordinator of the Health Services for the Homeless Health Center serving the Western Massachusetts Tri-County Region, underscored the imperative to bring an equity lens to the public health field. She stated, “We must do all we can to keep disparities from widening and to address the root cause of existing health inequities. It is said health is not a privilege; it is a right. Anything other than this is complicit, masking itself under intentional implicit bias pretense.”

Expressing appreciation for the recognition, **Dr. Matilde Castiel**, Commissioner of Worcester Health and Human Services, said, “The most pressing issues now for our community are homelessness, addiction and mental health disease, all of which can be interacting together or separately. This award is truly an honor to know that our work in Worcester is being noticed. We do have an amazing team that works to provide the best care for our residents, yet we have a lot to do.”

“I am honored to be receiving this award from my beloved colleagues in public health. At a time when LGBTQ+ communities, and especially the trans community, are under attack, when structural racism continues to sustain health inequities in BIPOC communities, it is all the more important to reflect on the goals and tools of public health and their sufficiency to meet the challenge,” said **Kevin Cranston**, MDiv., Assistant Commissioner and Director, Bureau of Infectious Disease and Laboratory Sciences at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

As an example of the need for an equity approach to public health, Cranston points to the current Mpox virus. Despite a vigorous response to the Mpox crisis last summer, where clinical and community partners delivered vaccines to over 20,000 people at risk, Black and Latinx people have been reached with this vaccine at rates 2-3 times lower than the rates at which they have gotten Mpox. Cranston offered a call to action, “It is urgent to center community members who are most impacted in our outreach strategies and work in partnership with community leaders to build confidence and create access to this powerful prevention tool.”

**Adrienne “Andy” Epstein** has embodied health equity throughout her 40+ year career as a public health nurse. Creating programs, mentoring others, and advocating for prevention, Epstein’s contributions can be seen in the response to HIV/AIDS, opioid dependence, and so much more. She said, “My life’s work has been doing what I can to reduce health inequities in our communities. Communities with healthy residents are healthy communities.”

The lessons, inspiration and calls to action from the awardees dovetail with MPHA’s framework to uplift the public health field. A current policy priority for MPHA is passage of [The Statewide Accelerated Public Health for Every Community \(SAPHE 2.0\) Act](#), which would transform the Massachusetts local public health system by ensuring minimum standards for every community, increasing local capacity, creating a uniform data collection and reporting system, and establishing sustainable state funding.

Oami Amarasingham, MPHA Deputy Director, noted, “These awardees represent the promise of a strong, coordinated, and nimble public health system. Their commitment to health equity also demonstrates that we all benefit from efforts to dismantle structural racism which must be informed by the voices of those most impacted by structural oppression.”

To date, MPHA has raised over \$120,000 through the support of corporate, foundation, educational sponsors and individual tickets. The Silver Sponsors for this year’s Spring Awards Breakfast include: Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts, Boston Children’s Hospital, Boston Public Health Commission, Boston University School of Public Health, The Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts, JSI (John Snow, Inc.), New Bedford Community Health, Northeastern University Public Health Program, and Tufts

University School of Medicine/Public Health. While tickets are sold out, anyone interested in making a donation can use this link: <https://bit.ly/MPHASAB2023>.

### **About the Awardees**

Abbreviated bios can be found on the following pages. Complete bios can be found on the MPHA website via the links above.

### **About MPHA**

The Massachusetts Public Health Association (MPHA) is a nonprofit organization that promotes a healthy Massachusetts through advocacy, community organizing, and coalition building. As leaders in the movement to create health equity by addressing the root causes of health and wellness, MPHA promotes equitable public health services throughout the Commonwealth and policies that impact the major drivers of health outcomes, such as access to healthy food, safe affordable housing, and transportation.

*To arrange an interview with any of the awardees or MPHA, please contact Toni Troop at 617-212-7571 or [tonitroop@gmail.com](mailto:tonitroop@gmail.com).*



**JUNE 2, 2023**

**SPRING AWARDS BREAKFAST**

8:00 AM - 10:30 AM | ARTISTS FOR HUMANITY EPICENTER | BOSTON, MA

**KEVIN CRANSTON**  
Paul Revere Award

**DR. MATILDE CASTIEL**  
Local Public Health Leadership Award

**TIANA DAVIS**  
Emerging Leader / Alfred Frechette Award

**ADRIENNE "ANDY" EPSTEIN**  
Lemuel Shattuck Award

## Meet the 2023 MPHA Awardees

### Dr. Matilde Castiel

The Local Public Health Leadership Award is presented to an outstanding individual working within the field of municipal public health, who has improved the local public health system in high need, under-resourced communities.

Dr. Matilde Castiel has been the Commissioner of Worcester Health and Human Services since 2015 and has always centered the needs of those who traditionally have been underserved. She serves as the Medical Director of the Latin American Health Alliance, a nonprofit organization in Worcester dedicated to combating homelessness and drug addiction she founded in 2009. Dr. Castiel mobilized city-wide stakeholders to meet community members on the ground and convened a Worcester-based COVID-19 Health Equity Task Force that updated COVID-positive data by demographic and zip-code, informing mobile testing and then altering vaccine outreach. She is also a founding Executive Committee member and current President of the Massachusetts Large Cities Health Coalition.

### Kevin Cranston

The Paul Revere Award honors someone for their visionary, lifelong leadership in the promotion of public health and for improving the health and wellbeing of residents across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Kevin Cranston's career in public health spans decades, beginning as a volunteer for BAGLY, an LGBTQ youth-serving organization, in the mid-80s; initiating a youth street outreach program at Boston Children's Hospital in 1987; establishing HIV/AIDS education programming at the (then) Massachusetts Department of Education in 1988; and landing at the state health department in 1995 where he worked with fierce determination to build a robust and community-centered response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. During his distinguished career, Cranston's achievements in the prevention and response to infectious diseases has had a significant impact on the lives of

residents throughout the Commonwealth. In addition, Cranston's work has laid a critical foundation for future public health by advocating for renovation of the State Public Health Laboratory and being an internal voice for the importance of quality data collection – including for sexual orientation and gender identity - that can help track and respond to health inequities. In his current role as the Assistant Commissioner, Director of the Bureau of Infectious Disease and Laboratory Sciences at the MA Department of Public Health, Cranston continues to draw from his Masters in Divinity pedigree from the Harvard Divinity School to seek and promote values-driven and equity-centered strategies to serve the public good.

### **Tiana Davis**

The Emerging Leader/Alfred Frechette Award recognizes a “rising star” under the age of 40 who has developed an innovative, unique, and original program and shows leadership and promise in public health or a related field in Massachusetts.

Tiana Davis may be newer to the public health field but her impact has been far-reaching. Davis was named Deputy Public Health Commissioner for the City of Springfield in July 2021. Among her many responsibilities, she oversees the Health Services for the Homeless Health Center, a Federally Qualified Health Center offering primary care, behavioral health, dental, and enabling support services across the Western Mass Tri-County (Hampden, Hampshire, and Franklin) to individuals and families experiencing homelessness. Davis is dedicated to ensuring that homeless residents are treated with respect and have access to quality healthcare and support services. Tiana's experience in government and in health care settings has given her a deep understanding of the healthcare system and the challenges faced by patients. She is committed to seeking ways to address public health challenges and improve health outcomes.

### **Adrienne “Andy” Epstein, RN**

The Lemuel Shattuck Award spotlights an individual's significant contributions to the betterment of public health practice across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Adrienne “Andy” Epstein has been a creative program developer for decades – from a visiting nurse initiative in the early days of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, to framing the Commonwealth's early needle exchange pilot, to a program making nasal naloxone available to those who were not first responders, to the development of protocols for medical cannabis. Epstein has been at the forefront of critical public health issues, visioning and testing strategies that were once novel and have now become best practice. A nurse to the core, Epstein's clinical work has crossed settings, from home visiting to community health centers to emergency room care in a developing health system in Mozambique, Africa. In each of these settings, she has not only brought clinical skills in diagnosis and treatment but developed strategies for new models of care delivery that addressed social conditions and could therefore improve outcomes.