

Business Newsmaker: MA Public Health Association to honor Community Health Center CEO

Posted Apr 19, 2018 at 6:02 PM

Updated Apr 19, 2018 at 6:02 PM

The Massachusetts Public Health Association is honoring **Cheryl Bartlett**, president and CEO of the **Greater New Bedford Community Health Center**, at the organization's 16th annual Spring Award Breakfast on June 1.

Bartlett, former commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health under former Governor Deval Patrick, will be honored with the Lemuel Shattuck Award, which is given to a person who has made a significant contribution in the field of public health throughout his or her career.

She was nominated for the honor by Stewart Landers, director of U.S. health services at John Snow, Inc., a Boston-based public health management consulting organization. In his nomination, Landers noted that Bartlett "is the first and only nurse to ever be the commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, bringing a lifetime of experience, including her clinical expertise, to her work."

He added, "I first met Cheryl after she had worked to establish the Nantucket AIDS Network (NAN). She did this at a time when stigma was high and many people on Nantucket worried that acknowledging the presence of HIV and AIDS on the vacation haven might deter the visitors on which the island depended. Turning around the attitudes, eventually NAN became a mainstay, providing services to scores of residents and summer visitors. Today, she continues her commitment to the underserved in her position as CEO of Greater New Bedford Community Health Center, a crucial health care provider for the vulnerable residents of the region."

“I am so honored to receive an award from an association of providers and advocates who believe, as deeply as I do, that everyone should have access to the highest quality healthcare,” Bartlett said. “Advocating for the expansion of healthcare access has been my life’s work and I am so proud that my home state remains committed to that ideal. Through these challenging times Massachusetts continues to be a beacon of hope for all its citizens.”

Bartlett was the first nurse to serve as Commissioner of the MA Department of Public Health and is certified in four different nursing specialties, including cardiac, dialysis, HIV/AIDS and infection control. Under her leadership, Massachusetts was the first state to declare the use of opioids and associated overdose deaths a public health emergency and to provide universal access to nasal Narcan, a drug to reverse overdoses. She chaired the Northeast Governor’s Opioid Task Force to develop the first in the nation regional plan to address substance use and distribution. She also led the Patrick administration’s signature anti-obesity initiative, Mass in Motion, recognized as an innovative public health model to promote health and wellness in communities across the state.

Bartlett received her nursing training at Yale New Haven Hospital and graduated summa cum laude from Stonehill College with a degree in health care administration.