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## *ABOUT US*

### Historic Milestones 1920-2010

During **World War One**, documents indicate that the notion of the Massachusetts Health Council sprang from the cooperative efforts that emanated from the role that health professionals played during the war.

**May 12, 1920:** MHC was created through the leadership of the Public Health Committee of the Massachusetts Medical Society. The purpose was to “provide a regular, definite means for securing an interchange of information of mutual interest to the organizations represented and for considering public health problems with a view to concerted action.” Nine member agencies were involved: MA Medical Society, American Red Cross, American Public Health Association, American Society for Control of Cancer, MA Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, MA Anti-Tuberculosis League, MA Association of Boards of Health, MA State Department of Health, MA Association of Directors of Public Health Nursing Committee of the MA state Nurses Association.

#### **1930's:**

- MHC Distributed free health bulletins to industrial workers joined by Dental Hygiene Council, MA state Nurses Association, MA Department of Public Health, and MA Veterinary Association.
- MHC distributed and promoted the finding the 1930 White House conference on Child Health and protection.
- Report for MHC “becomes a landmark and guide for the official and voluntary agencies of the State.” Fifty-eight bills based on study findings were submitted to Legislature and fourteen passed during the 1937 session.
- Led a drive to require public school children to be vaccinated  
H. 265: An Act to require the Vaccination for children in Private Schools.
- Led a drive to require the pasteurization of milk  
H.81: Act to provide communities over 5,000 that all milk shall be either pasteurized or from non-tuberculin cows.
- Lead a drive to stop the spread of Tuberculosis  
H.476: Act that counties should finance tuberculoses hospitals to combat the spread of T.B.

#### **1940's**

- The council continued to be concerned with the environment as it related to health status. MHC approved of legislation relative to further preventing pollution of the Charles River and an act authorizing the Dept. of Public Health to require certain improvements relative to the water supply including the establishment of proper water treatment works by cities, towns and water companies.

#### **1950's**

- MHC Nutrition Committee successfully sponsored legislation for fortifying commercial bread.
- MHC has 86 radio and 7 television programs on health subjects broadcast over Boston and Springfield stations.
- MHC incorporated as the Massachusetts Health Council under the laws of the Commonwealth. (Previously it had been referred to as “Massachusetts Central Health Council.”)

## 1960's

- MHC supports research on the social aspects of fluoridation issues and recommends establishment of the Citizens Committee on Promotion of Dental Health. A year later, legislation is filed by the MHC to give to local boards of health the authority to fluoridate water supplies without the necessity of community referendum.

## 1970's

- Creates a coalition to promote clean air and fight air pollution
- Begins an anti-smoking campaign
- Promotes and advances the development of a comprehensive school health education program for K-12. MHC also supported an establishment of Statewide Task Force on School Health (Blue Ribbon Task Force).
- Governor Dukakis requests the MHC's assistance with the selection of candidates for Secretary of Human Services as well as Departmental Commissioners.

## 1980's

- Worked tirelessly with Governor Michael Dukakis to pass a Universal Health Care Act - (H. 1811). Bill passed and became part of Ch. 23
- MHC sponsors program proclaimed by Governor Michael S. Dukakis as “Massachusetts Medication Awareness Month” The purpose of this campaign was to stimulate patients to get information in order to understand their medication regimens. Additionally, the program encouraged physicians to explain to patients how to take medicines correctly and how their drugs work. The project also: 1. Examined the effect of interchange programs. 2. Allowed pharmacists to answer questions, make recommendations regarding compliance, and discard old and outdated medications that elderly citizens have. 3. Evaluated the problem of the elderly's perceptions of the purpose for which drugs are used.
- Opposed co-payment for medication under Medicaid.
- Clean Indoor Air Act – Supported each year until it passed in 1987
- Supported legislation for tax incentives for MA employers, who had not done so in the past, to offer health insurance to their employees.
- Supported the establishment of a Healthy Start Program for pregnant women
- Worked with coalition to establish tough anti-drunk driving initiatives. Support of ‘Safe Roads Act’ – provides penalties for operating under the influence – toughens drunk driving statute and closes loopholes in existing enforcement provisions.
- Developed a bill requiring establishments of non- smoking policies in the workplace
- Urged Congress to enact a national health program – began “Vote Yes on Legislative Advisory Question for a National Health Program” campaign
- Support for increasing the Dental Medicaid Budget and improving the Dental Program
- Support of Clean Indoor Air Act – Passed (Regulates smoking in public places)
- Project Eldermed: MHC supported and helped promote this project that provided educational and hands-on material to help seniors understand and follow safe medicine practices.
- Passport to Good Health Care: This project was developed by the Pharmacy committee in order to improve patient compliance and allow health care professionals to better appraise a patient's drug therapy. Shaped like a bank passport, the pamphlet has separate messages to the patient, prescriber and pharmacist.
  - Unwanted Drug interactions can be avoided, help avoid duplications (generic and brand), allow patients to order medications appropriately when going on trips, and stress need to patronize with a single pharmacy in order to be consistent with medication.

- MHC and Governor Michael Dukakis proclaimed the week of **August 5, 1984** “Passport to Good Health Care Week.”
- Support of seat belt legislation.
- Support of funding for Immunization Programs

### 1990's

- Seat Belt Law
- Anti-smoking campaign included successful increased in Tobacco Excise Taxes
- Fought for Tobacco Company Lawsuit Settlement money to go for public health
- Creation of nationally recognized MA health status indicator report “Common Health for the Commonwealth: Massachusetts Trends in the Determinants of Health”
- Joined with coalition to create mental health parity
- Needle exchange to prevent HIV/AIDS spread
- Conference to highlight dangerous increase in childhood and adult obesity and overweightness. Becomes key indicator in MHC trends report

### 2000's

- Successful fight for Smoke Free Workplaces
- Increase of cigarette excise tax
- Member of coalition that fought for and saw passage of health care reform in Massachusetts
- 5 editions of “Common Health for the Commonwealth: Massachusetts Trends in the Determinants of Health”
- Widespread promotion of workplace wellness
- Administrator, editor, and promoter of state's health disparities report
- Fight for better school nutrition in line with long-term fight against childhood overweightness and obesity
- Banning trans fats in restaurants
- Member of coalition responsible for the passage of Health Care Reform in Massachusetts
- Fight to support and fund health education in schools
- Strengthening and promoting a prevention and wellness agenda