



CITY of NORTHAMPTON

Department of Health & Human Service

Health Commissioner ~ Merridith O'Leary

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**Northampton Department of Health and Human Services -
Public Health Nurse Katherine Kelly is Massachusetts 2022 Immunization
Champion Award**

NORTHAMPTON – Today, Northampton Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Commissioner Merridith O'Leary announced that Public Health Nurse Katherine Kelly is the recipient of the *Immunization Champion Award for Massachusetts 2022*. The award marks the inaugural reinstatement of the previously titled CDC Childhood Immunization Champion Award. The immunization champion award is presented jointly by the Association of Immunization Managers (AIM) and the Center for Disease Control (CDC) with recognition to only one Champion from each of the 50 states.

According to AIM, "Award recipients are considered to be individuals who have made a significant impact and contribution toward improving public health in their community, through their work in adult and childhood immunizations and the Immunization Champion Award recognizes individuals who are working at the local levels. It honors those doing an exemplary job or going above and beyond to promote or foster adult and childhood immunizations in their communities."

Since January 2021, DHHS staff and community volunteers have been dedicated to the COVID-19 response. Public Health Nurse Katherine Kelly MPH, MSN, CNP has been the medical lead for Northampton's public vaccination efforts. Nurse Kelly began providing vaccine clinics for residents of Northampton and for several additional communities in Hampshire County. Nurse Kelly, alongside the regional team, provides ongoing support and active vaccination clinics that support youth accessibility for the COVID-19 vaccine, which continue to be an important community resource.

Commissioner O'Leary said, "Kate takes pride in establishing creative clinic locations and collaborations that reach disenfranchised and marginalized populations. Her goal has been to reach people from all walks of life, races, ethnicities, gender identities, and ages with the COVID vaccine. We are very proud that one of our own was selected by the state to receive this honor, and know that this award is well deserved. It has been my personal privilege to work with such a tremendous and considerate leader as Kate Kelly."

Mayor Sciarra added, "Kate Kelly is a force of nature. I hope everyone in Northampton will join me in profound gratitude for her tireless work to make our community safer for everyone. We are fortunate to have Kate on our team."

The DHHS vaccination efforts have reached so many in Hampshire County thanks to Nurse Kelly's leadership. She has created new and strengthened existing relationships and resource-sharing with a variety of local partners, including the largest local pediatrics practice, the community hospital, local businesses, multiple public-school systems, local healthcare providers for unhoused individuals, Boards of Health in nearby communities, Hilltown Community Health Centers, the University of Massachusetts, Smith College, and others. She plans to build on these relationships for future public health outreach to improve the region's immunization status.

For more information, visit <https://northamptonma.gov/2104/Covid-19-Information> or you can contact the DHHS at 413-587-1215.

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