



CITY OF WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS

Michael V. O'Brien
City Manager

cm2009may05140226

Attachment for Item #

9.28 A

May 5, 2009

TO THE WORCESTER CITY COUNCIL

COUNCILORS:

The attached letter regarding a commitment to public health by UMass Memorial Health Care and UMass Medical School, received from Mr. John G. O'Brien and Dr. Michael Collins, is forwarded for the information of your Honorable Body.

As you know, a \$31 million budget deficit has required my Administration to examine services provided by every City department and division and to take steps to sustain core municipal services. In the Division of Public Health, my Fiscal Year 2010 Budget Recommendation sustains the functions of infectious disease surveillance, tuberculosis case management, and burial permitting. Health preparedness functions have been transferred to the Department of Emergency Communications – Division of Emergency Management, and tattoo parlor inspections will now be conducted by the Department of Inspectional Services – Division of Housing and Health Inspections. These inspections will be in addition to other public health inspections already conducted by staff within the Department of Inspectional Services per the reorganization approved by City Council in 2008. These actions have collectively stabilized core operations in the Division of Public Health for the foreseeable future.

I intend to assemble a task force, in cooperation and partnership with the Board of Health, by May 31, 2009 to research and develop the focused mission for our Division of Public Health that is based on national best-practices and is reflective of a sustainable financial model. By September 30, 2009, I will expect this task force to define a scope for core services in the 21st century health division, outline an appropriate staffing level, and identify appropriate performance measurement tools to gauge our progress in improving overall public health. I also expect that this task force's recommendations for the Division of Public Health will ensure that its mission is complementary to work already being conducted by our network of hospitals, physicians and community health providers, colleges and universities, and social service agencies. They provide a wide variety of services promoting health and wellness in our community and I believe that their success is our success, and vice versa. Accordingly, our



relationship with these agencies must be better defined and our success be reflected in data.

I am pleased to present to this City Council a commitment by UMass Memorial Health Care and UMass Medical School to provide financial and in-kind support for this effort (see attached). Additionally, during this transition period, UMass Memorial and UMass Medical have offered the following:

- The assistance of Registered Nurse graduate students for infectious disease surveillance in the event of an outbreak; and
- Flexibility in the use of UMass' annual donation to the City to allow the City's Public Health Nurses to focus on core public health functions (infectious disease surveillance and tuberculosis case management)

While the City is forced to reduce the services that it provides through its Division of Public Health due to budget constraints, I am confident that working with our partners in UMass Memorial and UMass Medical, we can develop a world-class Division of Public Health and community health network in Worcester.

I am grateful to UMass Memorial and its CEO John O'Brien, as well as UMass Medical and its Chancellor Dr. Michael Collins, for their assistance during this transition period.

Respectfully submitted,



Michael V. O'Brien
City Manager

May 5, 2009

City Manager Michael V. O'Brien
City of Worcester
455 Main Street
Worcester, MA 01608

RE: Division of Public Health

Dear City Manager O'Brien:

This letter is sent to formalize the outcome of ongoing conversations between UMass Memorial Health Care, Inc., the University of Massachusetts Medical School, and the City regarding core services performed by the City's Division of Public Health.

It is unfortunate that the struggling national and regional economy has led all of us to make difficult decisions to reduce programming and operations. We know from our conversations over time that your goal is to build a world-class, focused mission for the Division of Public Health and see that there is full integration of the Division's mission into the community health network in Worcester. You state often that there is a proud history in Worcester of promoting and preserving the health of our community and we could not agree more. The achievement of this goal may appear to be at risk at the moment due to the necessary staff reductions in the Division of Public Health; however, we believe that by working together with our community-based health/wellness partners the future is indeed bright.

UMass Memorial Health Care and its academic partner, the University of Massachusetts Medical School, are committed to the City and its citizens. As leaders in health care here in Central Massachusetts, we are here to assist and believe this goal can, and will, be achieved when the best of our community comes around the table to find the solutions.

To that end, UMass Memorial Health Care and the University of Massachusetts are pleased to offer the following assistance:

- UMass Memorial Health Care will commit *up to* \$50,000 (cash and/or in-kind services), to support a task force charged with sculpting a mission for the City's Division of Public Health that incorporates medical and health services provided by hospitals, clinics, and colleges/universities in Worcester, and further distinguishes the Division and Board of Health as leaders in health and wellness

policy here in Worcester. The identified mission will reflect the fiscal realities facing the City and the task force will be asked to develop an implementation plan to achieve our mutual goal of improving community health in Worcester.

- In partnership with UMass Memorial Health Care and the City of Worcester, the University of Massachusetts Medical School will commit in kind services to support the above noted taskforce and its activities.
- In the event that any public, infectious disease escalates to an outbreak level, UMass Memorial Health Care will be willing to discuss the supply and coordination of clinical resources necessary to assist the City of Worcester with surveillance and/or treatment either in an in-kind or cash manner. The University of Massachusetts Medical School, as it deems appropriate, will assist in this coordination.
- UMass Memorial Health Care agrees to discuss the re-allocation of existing grant funding to support Public Health Nurses in focusing on infectious disease surveillance and Tuberculosis case management.

UMass Memorial Health Care and the University of Massachusetts Medical School look forward to working with the Board of Health and members of your administration in the days and weeks ahead. It is our intention to support your goal of appointing a task force by May 31, 2009, and for recommendations to be finalized in September.

Sincerely,



John G. O'Brien
President & CEO
UMass Memorial Health Care, Inc.



Michael F. Collins, MD
Chancellor
University of Massachusetts Medical School