



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Public Health
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COMMISSIONER

December 30, 2009

Dear Colleagues:

I would like to extend my appreciation to the hundreds of public health nurses in Massachusetts who, in addition to their regular demanding duties, have been called upon as a key resource due to the H1N1 virus. Public health nurses have been the voice of reason, offering reassurance and expertise to their communities in response to the challenges of the H1N1 pandemic.

Public health nurses have provided their time and effort to support hundreds of public H1N1 and seasonal flu clinics throughout the Commonwealth in recent months. Your support has been and will continue to be crucial to the continued success of our efforts to protect the public from H1N1 and seasonal flu.

Public health nurses have also assisted in community education and awareness campaigns and with planning and exercises in preparation for the mass vaccination efforts. And this has occurred while you have maintained your other critical non-flu related activities at the local level.

Many people in the highest-risk groups have been vaccinated for both seasonal and H1N1 influenza. And, for the moment, H1N1 flu illness has declined in most areas. But, as you know all too well, we are only at the beginning of the traditional flu season in Massachusetts, and H1N1 could return at levels even higher than we saw this fall. Therefore, we ask for your continued support to assist vaccination efforts, to educate and inform the public about the flu and to be on call for the unpredictable.

Once again, thank you for your past efforts and for your continued commitment to protecting the public's health as we move into the final phase of the H1N1 mass vaccination effort. Best wishes to everyone for a happy and healthy new year – with less illness (H1N1 and otherwise) - and a more promising economic situation at the local and state levels.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Auerbach".

John Auerbach
Commissioner