

# Missouri public health association Communiqué



## PAST PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*Andrew Warlen, MPH  
Cass County Health Department*

Dear Colleagues,

It is hard to believe that it has only been two years since I became MPHA president. It really seems a lot longer. Today's normal is a lot different now that we are in the middle of a pandemic. I think I have aged about 5 years since March. This pandemic certainly points out the importance of Public Health in preventing and mitigating communicable disease. Like many of you, I have been working in my community to combat COVID-19.

This will be my last "President's Message" for the Communiqué. I want to thank all the public health workers who have put in countless hours to respond to this crisis. I also want to challenge all of you to continue to educate others on the importance of public health work. This is also an excellent time to show how a public health system based on the newly created Missouri Foundational Public Services Model created through the #HealthierMO initiative can help us more quickly respond to and recover from future outbreaks, epidemics and pandemics.

My last acts as President were to issue two Presidential Awards. The awards went to two people who gave years of service and dedication to MPHA and will not be holding MPHA Board positions for the first time in at least a decade. The first award was given to Denise Strehlow RD, LD, MPH, MSW. Denise most recently served in the role of Affiliate Representative to the APHA Governing Council. Denise's award was provided to her in recognition of her contributions, dedication, and leadership to the Missouri Public Health Association. On a more personal note, Denise can always be counted on for a friendly smile or her ability to diffuse a tense discussion. Additionally, Denise is always ready to volunteer and go the extra mile. Denise, it has been a privilege to serve with you on the MPHA Board.

The second award was given to Robert Niezgoda, MPH. Robert most recently held the post of Immediate Past-President. Robert's award was provided to him in recognition of his many years of visionary guidance, exceptional leadership, and unconditional commitment to MPHA. As many of you may know, Robert is pursuing his doctorate and has moved to Iowa. However, when I last talked to him to thank him for his service, he gave me a timeframe for when he thought he might be done with school and back in Missouri to serve again. "Tireless in his efforts" seems to describe Robert perfectly. It is a pretty good thing, too. Robert's efforts were instrumental in moving the #HealthierMO initiative forward and bringing together all the required stakeholders. Robert's contributions to MPHA and #HealthierMO will impact public health in Missouri for years to come. Robert, I will miss your guidance and leadership and your sage advice. I look forward to your return and the after-meeting beverage you owe me.

I have greatly enjoyed my time as President and look forward to many more years of serving MPHA. I hope you enjoy the newsletter. As always, please give us your comments and suggestions and we always welcome submissions. We are all interested in the public health work you are doing in your community.

Best Regards,

Andrew Warlen, MPH  
Immediate Past-President, Missouri Public Health Association

