

## Koh lauded as 'champion' of state homeless program

**Posted: Wednesday, May 6, 2015 12:05 am**

ANDOVER — Dr. Howard K. Koh of Andover, professor of the practice of public health leadership and director of the Leading Change Studio at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, is being honored by the Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program for his work with the homeless.

Koh is expected to receive the Dr. Jim O'Connell Award at the program's Medicine that Matters Gala on Wednesday night at the Renaissance Boston Waterfront Hotel.

The award is given annually to a person who embodies the spirit of the organization that provides medical services to the most vulnerable members of society. The program is in its 30th year caring for Boston's homeless families and adults.

CEO Barry Bock said in a release Koh has been an ardent champion of the work of Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program for nearly two decades starting in the 1990s. During his tenure as the state commissioner of public health, Koh convened a task force to investigate a rash of premature deaths among the city's street population.

“Since then, we have been thrilled to collaborate with Howard on a number of projects focusing on reducing morbidity and mortality among Boston's most vulnerable population — homeless men and women,” Bock said.

Koh has spent his career in public health, most recently as assistant secretary for health for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. In that role, he championed the Affordable Care Act, promoted the enrollment of underserved populations into health insurance plans and was the primary architect of landmark Health and Human Services strategic plans for tobacco control, health disparities and chronic hepatitis.

Founded in 1985, Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program has evolved into the largest program of its kind in the country, delivering services to more than 12,000 homeless men, women and children a year at more than 60 shelters and sites. For more information, visit [www.bhchp.org](http://www.bhchp.org).