

Thomas A. Massaro MD PhD
124 Lafayette Street
Marblehead MA 01945

Introduction

I am a candidate for the Board of Health (BoH) because

- 1) My educational background is strong and relevant,
- 2) My professional experience is significant and directly applicable, and
- 3) I can provide offer a fresh perspective on the challenges facing the BoH today.

Personal Information

I live on Lafayette Street in Marblehead with my wife Beth who works at Salem State and my son Lucas who is a 10th grader at Marblehead High. I have three older children and four grandchildren - two boys and two girls.

Professional Background:

My early training was in chemical and biomedical engineering with degrees from MIT, Cornell, and Berkeley. My first faculty position was at UW, Madison. My lab was well funded, and my research became more and more clinically oriented. As a result, I decided to go to medical school to strengthen that capacity. After residency and fellowship in Denver, I joined the faculty of medicine at the University of Virginia (UVA).

This was a time when managed care was being introduced into hospitals and medical practices. To better understand the drivers of this major change, I decided to take my first sabbatical at the Stanford Graduate School of Business. That experience was transformative. I had the opportunity to study under real leaders in health policy and economics. I came away amazed at the complexity of the US health system. Returning to UVA, I turned that awareness into an academic portfolio. In addition to my primary positions in Pediatrics and Public Health Sciences, I held joint appointments in the Law School, and the Business School. I co-authored a book on the business of critical care and was eventually awarded the Harrison Foundation Professor of Medicine and Law endowed chair.

In trying to understand the US system, I began researching other national health systems. I had the opportunity to study, teach, and/or consult in New Zealand, Germany, the Czech Republic, China, and Singapore. My global health interest ultimately took to me to Botswana which at the time was at the peak of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. I received a Fulbright Senior Specialist award to develop a program of psychosocial support for HIV orphans and vulnerable children which was supported by the Global Fund. Eventually I was appointed Founding Dean of the new University of Botswana School of Medicine. As Founding Dean, I had a direct line of responsibility to the Ministry of Education and a dashed one to the Ministry of Health. I was also principal investigator for a \$10M NIH medical education partnership grant to help with the building of that school.

After returning from Botswana, I resumed teaching public health, health policy, and health management at UVA. In addition, I did some significant public health consultation for the Southwest Virginia Regional Health Authority helping to develop a major package of public health services funded by a merger of two struggling regional healthcare systems. Prior to

moving to Marblehead, I held the position of Chief Medical Officer in the New Mexico Department of Health during the peak of the COVID crisis.

My Motivation for Seeking the Position and the Strengths I will Bring to It. I am delighted that my family now lives in Marblehead. I am impressed by the dynamic environment here and I would like to contribute by sharing some of my experience in medicine and public health. Like most pediatricians, I am an optimist. That influences my leadership style. I try to be a positive coach developing strengths for the future rather than focusing on the problems of the past. I generally find it easier to be an advocate rather than a detractor.

I am also a very curious person. I get excited about learning new things. I work hard at trying to be a good listener - to learn from others. I believe that my comfort with being open about learning and sharing is germane to the BoH position today. Rightly or wrongly, there appears to be some concern about the communication from the Department of Health – especially around the Transfer Station. Over the years I have learned that in public health it is virtually impossible to overcommunicate. That awareness will guide my service and my approach toward connecting with the entire Marblehead community.

I am an engaged, hands-on manager most comfortable working in a team environment. I am aware that teams work better when team members trust each other, and team leaders are key to creating and maintaining the culture of trust. I will try to apply that perspective to my efforts on the Board.

The primary purpose of the Board of Health is to protect and, when possible, improve the health status of this community. I am amazed that it is many years since there has been a physician on the Marblehead Board of Health. I am confident that my medical background gives me a great platform from which to serve. As a pediatrician, it will be easy for me to focus on the health of our children and adolescents. At the same time, I am a senior and therefore keenly aware of the health challenges of that stage of life as well. I will do everything I can to positively influence the wellbeing of the town and all its residents.

I promise to be very diligent about getting up to speed as quickly as possible on BoH issues. I want to be able to contribute meaningfully to the discussions, and I look forward to hearing as much as possible from everyone who has opinions about them.

Thank you.