

Howard Koh MD, MPH
Assistant Secretary for Health
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Dr. Howard K. Koh serves as the 14th Assistant Secretary for Health for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), after being nominated by President Barack Obama and confirmed by the U.S. Senate in 2009. Dr. Koh oversees the HHS Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health which is comprised of 12 offices, including the Office of the Surgeon General, the Commissioned Corps of the U.S. Public Health Service, 10 Regional Health Administrators across the country and 10 presidential and secretarial advisory committees. He also serves as senior public health advisor to the Secretary. The Office of Assistant Secretary for Health specifically includes an array of interdisciplinary programs relating to disease prevention, health promotion, the reduction of health disparities, women's and minority health, adolescent health, HIV/AIDS, vaccine programs, physical fitness and sports, bioethics, population affairs, blood supply, research integrity and human research protections. As the Assistant Secretary for Health, he is dedicated to the mission of creating better public health systems for prevention and care so that all people can reach their highest attainable standard of health.

Dr. Koh previously served as the Harvey V. Fineberg Professor of the Practice of Public Health, Associate Dean for Public Health Practice, and Director of the Division of Public Health Practice at the Harvard School of Public Health. Dr. Koh served as Commissioner of Public Health for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (1997-2003) after being appointed by Governor William Weld. As Commissioner, Dr. Koh led the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, which included a wide range of health services, four hospitals, and a staff of more than 3,000 professionals.

Dr. Koh graduated from Yale College and the Yale University School of Medicine. He completed postgraduate training at Boston City Hospital and Massachusetts General Hospital, serving as chief resident in both hospitals. He has earned board certification in four medical fields: internal medicine, hematology, medical oncology, and dermatology, as well as a Master of Public Health degree from Boston University.

He has earned numerous awards and honors for interdisciplinary accomplishments in medicine and public health, including the Distinguished Service Award from the American Cancer Society, 2012 Champion Award from the Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, the Drs. Jack E. White/LaSalle D. Leffall Cancer Prevention Award from the American Association for Cancer Research and the Intercultural Cancer Council, the "Hero of Epilepsy" Award from the Epilepsy Foundation, and the Baruch S. Blumberg Prize from the Hepatitis B Foundation. A past Chair of the Massachusetts Coalition for a Health Future, Dr. Koh was named by the New England Division of the American Cancer Society as "one of the most influential persons in the fight against tobacco during the last 25 years".