

MASSACHUSETTS

Monica Bharel, MD, MPH

Commissioner

Massachusetts Department of Public Health



Monica Bharel became commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) in February 2015. As commissioner, she is responsible for spearheading the state's response to the opioid crisis, as well as leading the department's implementation of healthcare cost containment legislation, Chapter 224, reducing health disparities, finding public health solutions for healthcare reform, finding innovative solutions using data and evidence-based practices, and other healthcare quality improvement initiatives.

Bharel comes to DPH widely recognized for her dedication to healthcare for underserved and vulnerable populations, including ensuring that state and national healthcare reform efforts enhance care for homeless individuals without inadvertently widening healthcare disparities. She previously served as the chief medical officer of Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program, the largest nonprofit healthcare organization for homeless individuals in the country. Under her leadership, the organization provided healthcare to over 12,500 homeless men, women, and children in the greater Boston area at over 70 different sites.

In the public service sector, Bharel was a gubernatorial appointment to the Behavioral Health and Primary Care Integration Task Force under the Massachusetts healthcare payment reform initiative. She has also participated on the Massachusetts Medicaid payment reform policy committee and Primary Care Payment Reform Initiative operations committee. Additionally, she served on the National Quality Forum expert panel on Risk Adjustment for Socioeconomic Status.

Bharel has served on the faculty of Harvard Medical School, Boston University Medical School, and Harvard School of Public Health. She was previously at Massachusetts General Hospital and Boston Medical Center. She has practiced general internal medicine for 20 years in neighborhood health centers, city hospitals, the Veterans Administration, university hospitals, and nonprofit organizations.

She received her Master of Public Health degree through the Commonwealth Fund/Harvard University Fellowship in minority health policy, with a concentration in healthcare policy and management. She received her medical degree from Boston University School of Medicine and completed a residency and chief residency in internal medicine at Boston City Hospital/Boston Medical Center.