MASSACHUSETTS HOUSING AND SHELTER ALLIANCE

I N I T I A T I N G S O L U T I O N S T O E N D H O M E L E S S N E S S

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Jessie M. Gaeta, M.D. receives the *Be the Change Award* from the Massachusetts Conference for Women

BOSTON – Massachusetts Housing and Shelter Alliance (MHSA) Physician Advocate Jessie M. Gaeta, M.D. received the *Be the Change Award* from the Massachusetts Conference for Women on December 11, 2008 at The Boston Convention and Exhibition Center in front of more than 5,000 attendees.

Jessie M. Gaeta, M.D. dedicates her life to caring for our poorest and most vulnerable neighbors, homeless individuals, on two levels: directly and personally through her work as a practicing internist at Boston University Medical Center (BUMC) and Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program (BHCHP) and through policy advocacy to *end* homelessness at the Massachusetts Housing and Shelter Alliance (MHSA). Dr. Gaeta is a "woman for others" in every sense of the word, as a devoted wife and mother of two, compassionate doctor and a force for social change in Massachusetts. Her life embodies the change she wishes to see in the world.

Dr. Gaeta treats homeless patients on the streets and in shelters, and then brings this experience to her work at MHSA as an advocate for permanent supportive housing programs that are tailored to the medical needs of chronically homeless people. She raises awareness of the public health implications of homelessness and the cost-effectiveness of a Housing First approach and has successfully influenced Massachusetts lawmakers to create social change through new approaches to homelessness.

The Massachusetts Conference for Women *Be the Change Award* was created to honor women who personify compassion for their community and commitment to improving the everyday lives of those around them. The *Be the Change Award* recognizes a woman who rises above and beyond in the realm of community service by shining light on an unmet need in her community. Her devotion inspires others to carry out their call to action; her efforts pave the way for that action to transpire.

"I was shocked and thrilled to receive this award," said Dr. Gaeta. "I accept it on behalf of my co-workers at the Massachusetts Housing and Shelter Alliance who are striving to end homelessness, and my patients who are the most in need of recognition."

As part of the award, Dr. Gaeta will receive an all-inclusive, one-week stay for two at Canyon Ranch in Lenox, Massachusetts or Tucson, Arizona.

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