

Friends of Public Health -

I am so pleased to have been asked to welcome you here this evening on behalf of the City of Portland. And, I am equally delighted to be able to share in this celebration for Friends of Public Health.

When I was Multnomah County Commissioner, I had the opportunity to oversee the Multnomah County Health Department. It was a tremendous learning experience. And, for those of you who know me, it really cemented my interest in assisting our elder citizens, helping victims of domestic violence and victims of child abuse.

But more than that it compounded my commitment toward helping us work toward a goal that Portland be the most Family Friendly City in the nation. To do that, we must provide the best possible community for our citizens to feel good about raising their families. And that means providing the assurances that when we are sick, we will be taken care of. No one should have to be denied health care and no one should be saddled with the debt that so often comes with sickness.

I never cease to marvel at the compassion of those who work in the field of healthcare. It is difficult, frustrating and so all consuming--it is virtually impossible not to want to get involved when you see an injustice---yet so very rewarding when you can help even one person.

As I look around the room, and look at your list of trustees, I can see that this clearly is a gathering of friends and a unique opportunity for all of us to join together and help out our community, our neighbors, our families and our friends to assure that everyone is getting the care that they need and deserve.

Thanks to all of you for recognizing the need for the Friends of Public Health and for making it a reality.