



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**TENNESSEE HEALTH COMMISSIONER LISA PIERCEY RECEIVES
WILLIAM SCHAFFNER, MD, PUBLIC HEALTH HERO AWARD**
Award Given by Tennessee Medical Assoc. & Tennessee Public Health Assoc.

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – Tennessee Health Commissioner Lisa Piercey, MD, MBA, FAAP has been honored with the William Schaffner, MD, Public Health Hero Award for 2020. This award is given every two years by the Tennessee Medical Association in partnership with the Tennessee Public Health Association.

“Dr. Piercey is the easy choice for this award because she has met uncertain times with unprecedented effort leading the state's public health response and supporting Tennessee providers in battling the worst pandemic in recent memory,” said TMA Chief Executive Officer Russ Miller, CAE. “She has publicly been the steady voice of a caring and concerned physician as she guides the people of Tennessee through this ever-evolving challenge, issuing sound advice and stern warnings based on data so every Tennessean can make informed and safe decisions. Away from the cameras, Dr. Piercey brings together key stakeholders and frontline workers across the state to help them make the right decisions in enacting safe procedures. Dr. Piercey and the thousands of heroes she represents as the commissioner of the state's public health enterprise will be what guides Tennessee through these troubled times.”

Piercey was selected for her work in leading the state's public health response to the COVID-19 pandemic and her continued vigilance in protecting Tennesseans during one of the largest public health crises in recent memory. Piercey from her position on Governor Bill Lee's task force has facilitated the state's testing and treatment initiatives that allowed experts across the state to understand the scale on which the virus is affecting Tennessee. She then helped direct the state's health care facilities, providers and institutions in developing a statewide plan to deal with the treatment and containment of this unexpected novel virus. Piercey has been a steadfast voice for patients and vulnerable populations since the onset of the pandemic, appearing by the governor's side and giving Tennesseans measured, pragmatic and sometimes stern advice on how to protect themselves and each other. Further, Piercey leads the state's efforts in preparing the public for a vaccination program that hopefully mitigates the effects of this pandemic on our state.

“Our public health system is that first line of defense needed for each of us to prosper physically, mentally and materially. An accomplished physician and administrator, Commissioner Piercey's empathy for others has garnered the trust and commitment of all tirelessly fighting the COVID-19 pandemic throughout our state. This makes her particularly appropriate as our choice for this year's William Schaffner, MD, Public Hero Award, and we are grateful for her service to Tennessee,” said Kimberly Harrell, executive director of the Tennessee Public Health Association.



TMA and TPHA created the joint award in 2014 to recognize Tennesseans who demonstrate extraordinary efforts in the advancement of public health through long-term career achievements or by working on a critical and immediate public health issue. Nominations come from members of the organizations, and the award is given once every two years to an honoree who resides or practices in Tennessee and demonstrates laudable efforts in improving the state's public health. The award is named in honor of William Schaffner, MD, an internationally acclaimed expert in the field of infectious diseases and the inaugural recipient of his namesake award in 2014.

"I am deeply grateful to be recognized by our valued partners at TMA and TPHA with the iconic Schaffner Award," said Tennessee Health Commissioner Lisa Piercey, MD, MBA, FAAP. "It is a humbling honor to serve Tennesseans alongside Governor Lee and our dedicated team of professionals during this historic time in our state and nation."

Piercey joined Governor Bill Lee's cabinet in January 2019 as the 14th commissioner for the Tennessee Department of Health. Prior to joining TDH, Piercey spent a decade in health systems operations, most recently as executive vice president of West Tennessee Healthcare, a public, not-for-profit health system with more than 7,000 employees servicing 22 counties. Piercey is certified by the American Board of Pediatrics in both General Pediatrics and in the specialty field of Child Abuse Pediatrics.

The mission of the Tennessee Department of Health is to protect, promote and improve the health and prosperity of people in Tennessee. Learn more about TDH services and programs at www.tn.gov/health.

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PHOTO OUTLINE: Tennessee Health Commissioner Lisa Piercey, MD, MBA, FAAP receives the 2020 William Schaffner, MD, Public Health Hero Award from the Tennessee Medical Association and Tennessee Public Health Association Nov. 10, 2020.

This news release can be accessed online at www.tn.gov/health/news.html.

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