

Transcript for Gov. Healey

Massachusetts Gov. Maura Healey was presented with a Chancellor's Medal and delivered the Commencement address at UMass Chan Medical School on June 2. She helped celebrate the Classes of 2024 from the Tan Chingfen Graduate School of Nursing, the Morningside Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences and the T.H. Chan School of Medicine.

Then transcription was created using speech recognition software. While it has been reviewed by the Office of Communications, it may contain errors.

MUSIC

Voice over artist

Thank you for listening to the Voices of UMass Chan, featuring the people, ideas and advances of UMass Chan Medical School.

Chancellor Michael F. Collins

Please join me in welcoming Her Excellency, the governor of Massachusetts, Laura Hill.

Gov. Maura Healey

Good afternoon, everyone. Good afternoon to Chancellor Collins. Thank you for saying all those nice things about me. It was most unnecessary. My mom's a nurse. My grandmother is a nurse. My aunt. Sad story is I was afraid of blood at an early age. I got over that. But it just wasn't going to be the path for me. Though, I regret that. Because if I had to do all over again, I probably would have gotten into a profession that you all are about taking care of people, looking after people, challenging yourselves to identify new solutions that are going to make people's lives better, maybe not today, maybe not tomorrow, but at some point. So it's an incredible honor for me to be able to be here with you today to join Chancellor Collins, the trustees, Chair Burns, incredible faculty, staff of UMass Chan, to thank you for the honor of receiving the Chancellor's Medal which is really just a testament to the people that I've had the privilege of working with for so many years in different realms. But really to be here today to say thank you to each and every one of you graduates who are going to go on and do really, really important things at a time when our state, our country, our planet needs you. I also want to thank Dr. Anne Kurth and Rick Sontag for their remarkable contributions to humanity and well-being that we just heard laid out. Of course, to the parents, the grandparents, the aunts, the uncles, the brothers and sisters, children, friends of these graduates, thank you for doing all that you've done to support them, encourage them, and help get them through. But most of all, you the Class of 2024, thank you for being so inspiring, brilliant, caring, and most of all committed to doing this work. Congratulations. Congratulations to the new physicians. Congratulations to our new scientists and researchers. Congratulations to all our newly minted nurse leaders, yes. Congratulations to all of you. Thank you to all of you. You've answered a noble calling. You have made a commitment to heal, to care to relieve suffering and improve the lives of people and communities around you. Now already, you guys have shown that commitment. You've proven that those long nights I know no sleep ever, sometimes weeks on end, it feels like studying or working in the lab challenge challenging clinical experiences, overcoming personal obstacles, because also behind that degree are a whole bunch of stories and a whole bunch of other stuff you guys had to work through outside of this campus to get you to where you are today. And that is learning too. And of course, mastering a rigorous course of study. And not for nothing. starting

out in a pandemic that turned not just your education upside down but our world upside down, but reminded all of us how much we depend on medical science and our health care professionals. You earned your degrees in ways that few have ever done before. You made it to this moment and to this day. It's a really big milestone for you and for your families. But as your Governor, I am here to tell you it's a milestone in a day of significance for our state. It is. That is why I am here. Because UMass Chan is not like any other medical school. This place is really special. This is Massachusetts, a school based here in the heart of our state. With clinical and teaching affiliates. We've heard from Western Massachusetts, all the way out to Cape Cod. See, you know, it is the way it should be. And by the way that's not to say that I don't welcome and embrace all of you who have come from outside of Massachusetts, it's awesome. I just want you to stay in Massachusetts. But you are here in Massachusetts, we're home to a few things, you should be proud of this first public school. First public library, First public park. Next year, we're going to celebrate 250 years of the great American experience we invented the United States of America and democracy and so many of the freedoms that we hold dear, be proud of that. And, be proud that Massachusetts, we are the home to and the beacon of health care excellence. The first state, the first state to guarantee health care, for every single resonance to this day, we lead the country with coverage of over 95 – 98 percent. We are thankful to so many here, including Nobel Prize winners. We are the global leader of life science research and medical innovation. We are the state that brought the world the COVID vaccine and where new cures and therapies are being developed every single day. Many of them are right here at UMass Chan. It is awesome. And it is so awesome. And I tell you this because it's important. We all got to know our history and our context and the world that you are a part of. And also, more importantly, going out to last year, our excellence was recognized by the federal government, naming our state as the Investor Catalyst Hub for ARPA-H. Now, not everyone knows that ARPA-H is but you guys do. It's the country's moonshot. It's our new national agency that is directed to funding medical discovery, accelerating transformative health solutions. And Massachusetts. We were chosen because of our global innovation, leadership, and our commitment to health equity. And I can tell you, having been part of those conversations in the early days when I just got on this job, that it was UMass Chan at the center of those conversations, a key partner in our hub, in our application. And the new education and research building that you are going to celebrate later this week will help take this ARPA-H leadership to another level. We are a state a people that believe at our core in learning and discovery. We believe in access to world class care. And we believe, frankly, in the dignity and the worth of everybody out there, including the most vulnerable, and that's why health equity is at the center of so much of what you learn about and that we do. As our public institution of medical health education, UMass Chan is the keeper and the nurturer of those values, leading the nation in primary care and nursing excellence, leading in medical science and winning get this - this school alone gets more NIH research funding than more than many other entire states more than half the states in the country. That is amazing. And it helps fuel the fires of our innovation economy here in Massachusetts, leading in your commitment to health equity, and correcting historical and justices. Look like graduates of this great institution, you're going to go out and make all those values real, make them real every day, and the lives of folks you intersect with and care for and research and try to help. Not just here but around the world. So that is why as Governor, I am so proud of each and every one of you and so grateful. Because the truth is, we need you now more than ever. Chancellor mentioned a little bit of the times that we are in you know but you live it breathe it all of you out there every day. So, this is a critical time for graduates, including for future of health care. It is a moment of great challenge. But it is also a moment of, as Chancellor said, great hope, great opportunity. Now we face cost challenges and financial challenges in hospitals and health centers and labs.

We know that health equity is our priority, yet it does not exist in reality for so many exacerbating these challenges. We also face a talent shortage. I know we all know there is a critical need for more health care professionals both here and across the country. The most recent data shows vacancy rates of 12.5 percent doctors and 15 to 17 percent for nurses. I could go on. You live it, you see it every day. But in the face of critical and growing needs, particularly as it comes to behavioral health. Here you are stepping up. And our job is to support you in the weeks, months, and years ahead. Because we know the toll of work, burnout, the strain, you all talk about and think about the care you give to others, or the focus the intentionality brings in your research to others. But we do not as a society talk enough about the need to take care of those who are caring for others. So, you got to look out for yourselves, and you got to look out for each other. And we collectively have to look out for you. We have to do a better job of supporting our health care professionals. Yes!

That includes mental health too. But this is a time when you can make a real and lasting difference. Your opportunities abound and we need you. We need your skilled hands and your caring hearts and your brilliant minds, and you're growing leadership. This is a moment with the advance of technologies, stuff is going to happen at an exponential pace. And I want you all there as the ones whose ideas will be heard and will bring the energy for change. It's your generation that's going to develop and implement new cures and therapies. I recently filed an economic development bill. We're going to reauthorize Massachusetts Life Sciences for another 10-year billion-dollar investment. This is the program that made our state who we are in this space, and we are going to continue to lean in and fund that and invest in all of you. We are going to take it to a new level with a new focus on research and clinical settings in particular, and a focus on health equity. Already, our advancing health equity program is directing attention to the social determinants of health, especially around maternal health disparities, including those disparities, more persistent along racial lines. I am committed, I'm committed to working with all of you in eliminating, not just reducing but eliminating, racial and economic, yes, regional disparities in health outcomes exist right here in our state. Because I want to work on building a world where every single kid grows up with access to world class care, and also, all the stuff, the social needs that support good health, fundamental, before anybody shows up in a waiting room. We need you to get the job done. And I know looking out at all of you that we have the talent. The people with compassion right in front of us, you will be the generation that advances all of this to the next level.

So, as you begin the next stage of your career, please continue to speak your mind. Use your voices, share your ideas, grow your communities, build on the relationships that you have already been developing right here at UMass Chan. And bring all your talents and your beliefs to bear. And whether you came here for school, or you grew up here in Massachusetts, I want to thank you for being here. And I want to invite you all directly to continue to stay here. I mean that. We're working on reducing the cost of housing. I filed a big bill on that. I want people to stay here. Growing families here. Growing businesses here. Growing opportunities here. Because this is the place to be for science, in health care. And for you all, this really is your time. This is your era. It will be shaped by your innovation and science and by the creativity and brilliance of your classmates here and colleagues across our state. It will be shaped by your compassion, your empathy, and your commitment to equity. Our future will be shaped by the energy and the ideas that you bring. Don't wait for anybody else. Your ideas, your work ethic is just as good as anyone else's. Don't you ever forget that? Your work and our future is

going to shape the outcomes for so many, many people. And again, I want to express my deep appreciation for your commitment to health care and life sciences, particularly at this moment in history. And I want to invite you to continue to explore and be great here in our state. I really wish all the best to all of you on your journeys. I'll also say this, and then I'm going to sit down. Life as I've experienced, there's a lot of ups and downs. You have to be willing to continue to persevere. Because you may find that it is a real challenge to do what you're doing at a particular time. Please hang with it. Stay with it. Ride it out. Find the support that you need to get you through because we need you not just, we in Massachusetts, but this world needs you. God bless all of you. I wish you the very best. Congratulations 2024.

APPLAUSE

MUSIC

Voice over artist

Follow us at UMass Chan on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn. On YouTube, find us at UMass Chan Medical School.