Ms. Lillian Wald is recognized for her dedication to the cause of public health. Her considerable achievements include that of founder of public health nursing in the United States, the establishment of the Henry Street Settlement, and a pioneer in the field of child welfare. While Ms. Wald is no longer among us, her spirit, commitment, and dedication to public health nursing remain and are reflected in the works of Ms. Charlotte E. Stepanian.

Ms. Stepanian’s public health nursing career began in 1971 as the first public health nurse in the Town of Merrimac, Massachusetts. She has held that position for the past forty-one years developing programs to meet the community’s health needs. Early in her career, Ms. Stepanian initiated blood lead screening of pre-school children, blood pressure screening clinics for elders, and a community-wide sharps collection program which is still in existence. More recently, her role as a public health nurse has expanded to include a community-based Parish Nursing and community emergency preparedness programs. Throughout her public health nursing career, Ms. Stephanian has been at the forefront, promoting and protecting the health of a population.

The best example of Ms. Stepanian’s indigenous public health nurse leader is provided by a colleague who wrote in her letter of nomination, “*Charlotte Stepanian’s work on the Massachusetts American Public Health Nurses Leadership and Practice Manual serves as the foundation for practicing public health nurses across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts*.” As adjunct professor at St. Joseph’s College, she has mentored more than 250 undergraduate and graduate students in public health nursing, helping them to recognize and address the health needs of their own communities. As such, Ms. Stepanian’s efforts have been instrumental in the creation of a large, well-educated public health nurse workforce to meet today’s ever changing healthcare issues and challenges.

As a social reformer, Ms. Stepanian stands toe-to-toe with Ms. Wald in her advocacy and leadership in public health nursing. As an advocate, she has spoken against a workforce reduction that threatened the role of public health nurses in Massachusetts and championed the rights of children and elder adults. Her leadership roles are many including founding member, president, vice-president, board officer, and chair of the Education and Professional Practice Committee of the Massachusetts Public Health Nurses Association. She has held the position of president of the New England Chapter of Health Ministry Association, president of the New England Chapter of Endicott College Alumni Council and is current secretary of the St. Joseph’s College Alumni Council.

In recognition of her contributions and achievements in the fields of nursing education, public health nursing, and community service, Ms. Stepanian has received the Area Health Education Center-Merrimack Valley Outstanding Nurse Honoree award in 2001, the Massachusetts Association of Public Health Nurse of the Year award in 2003, Faculty of the Year Award from Saint Joseph’s College Masters of Nursing Program award in 2006 and 2010, and the Massachusetts Commission on Women Unsung Heroine Award in 2007.

She has brought people and organizations together to work towards enhancing population health and the profession of public health nursing. It is with deep gratitude and appreciation, the APHA Public Health Nurses Section recognizes Ms. Stepanian as the recipient of the 2012 Lillian Wald Service Award.