

## **Charles D. Baker**

*President and C.E.O., Harvard Pilgrim Health Care, Inc.  
Class of 1975*



Charles Baker's achievements have made a tremendous difference in the lives of so many. His career is marked by his dedication to serving our community, helping others and meeting the difficult challenges we face as a society.

After graduating from Harvard University in 1979 and receiving his M.B.A. from Northwestern University in 1986, Charles Baker was Co-Director of the Pioneer Institute for Public Policy Research, Inc. for three years. He next served for three years as Undersecretary and then Secretary for the Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services, and then served another three years as the Secretary of Administration and Finance for the State of Massachusetts. Continuing his career in the private sector, Charles Baker has been first President and C.E.O of Harvard Vanguard, and now President and C.E.O of Harvard Pilgrim Health Care, Inc..

His work in both the public and private sectors has earned him numerous awards including: the National Governor's Association Award for Distinguished Service, an annual award given to only four state officials throughout the country; the Massachusetts Municipal Association's Marcia Carlton Award recognizing outstanding public service; the Massachusetts Housing and Shelter Alliance Brian Kelley Public Servant Award for his work on behalf of the homeless; the Massachusetts Hospital Association's Stephen Hegarty Memorial Award for leadership on important health care issues and many other honors too numerous to mention.

As if this were not enough, Charles Barker holds several offices and memberships on Boards and Boards of Directors for such organizations as the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce, the Kenneth Schwartz Center, America's Health Insurance Plans and the Massachusetts Association of Health Plans.

Charles Baker also holds elected office as a Member of the Swampscott Board of Selectmen. His personal dedication to public service is amazing. For example, Charles now lives with his wife Lauren and their three children, Charlie aged 13, A.J. aged 10, and Caroline aged 7 in Swampscott, Massachusetts. Charles saw that his town was in a difficult situation financially. He thought his experience might be of help so he ran for office and won. His service exemplifies what it means to be an active citizen and neighbor.

Where, other than from his family, did Charles Baker learn these values of community service and hard work? He remembers back to his time at Needham High School and particularly a friend of his, Gary Cullen. Gary Cullen's untimely death and tragic loss deeply affected the Needham community. It was a difficult lesson to learn, that life is not necessarily fair. This prompted many, including Charles to see how precious every day is. He remembers this experience as an important turning point.

Charles remembers Needham High School as an enjoyable place to go. He remembers two teachers particularly, Mr. O'Donnell who taught a course called "The American Presidency" and Mr. Holt who taught Social Studies. From both, Charles learned the invaluable lessons of maintaining intellectual curiosity and discovery, and that not every person has the same perspective on the world.

Charles very much enjoys returning to Needham to visit with family and friends and reminisce about the good old days growing up here. We are honored to welcome him back to celebrate his extraordinary achievements

M.H.