

JOB DESCRIPTION HEALTH COMMISSIONER

ROLE OVERVIEW:

An appointed public official who serves as the Health Commissioner of the General Health District in Mahoning County, Ohio, and chief executive officer of the Mahoning County District Board of Health. The Health Commissioner reports to the District Board of Health. The Board of Health prescribes the terms and conditions of appointment in accordance with Ohio law. The term may not exceed five years and may be renewed.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS:¹

- *Practices and supports visionary leadership* – works with the Board of Health, staff and other stakeholders to develop and articulate a vision for public health and the organization and encourages others to share the vision; assures the integration of the Board of Health into the transforming health system
- *Creates sense of mission* – articulates and models professional values and ethics; facilitates organizational mission development and reassessment; develops policies and processes that translate mission and vision into action
- *Serves as effective change agent* – facilitates application of systems thinking; develops and implements performance measurement and evaluation strategies; facilitates strategic and tactical assessment and planning; facilitates empowerment of staff and community partners to take action; generates fresh ideas and approaches to solving public health problems
- *Political competencies* – identifies and analyzes public health policy issues and alternatives; utilizes principles of media advocacy to communicate the public health mission to stakeholders; works with community coalitions and advocacy groups; guides the community and organization in seeking policy change and action on public health issues; translates policy decisions into organizational and community programs and services
- *Negotiation* – guides and mediates the investigation and resolution of conflict within the organization and with other governmental agencies and community stakeholders
- *Marketing and education* – utilizes principles of social marketing and health education to communicate with target audiences
- *Manages organizational dynamics* – assesses organizational environment, needs, assets, resources and opportunities; develops new organizational structures utilizing knowledge of organizational learning, behavior and culture
- *Employs inter-organizational collaborating mechanisms* – includes key stakeholders in collaborative ventures; develops collaborative and partnering strategies, including task forces and coalitions; facilitates networking of all stakeholders; develops collaborative strategic action plans
- *Social forecasting and marketing* – identifies and interprets emerging trends in public health and provides information, analysis, and interpretation to stakeholders and community partners
- *Team-building* – develops organizational team structures and systems focused on customer service, continuous quality improvement, and accreditation standards; facilitates development of teams; serves as team facilitator, mediator, and effective team member

TASKS ASSOCIATED WITH FUNCTIONS, COMPETENCIES AND SKILLS

- Assures that the Board of Health conducts organizational strategic planning and monitors progress toward strategic goals
- Assures that the Board of Health participates in or leads ongoing community health assessment and planning in partnership with other community stakeholders, e.g., hospitals and other health departments
- Identifies and pursues funding from public and private foundation sources to address public health priorities identified through organizational strategic planning and community health assessments
- Seeks volunteer leadership positions with local funding agencies, e.g., United Way, Family First Council, community foundations, to encourage them to support public health priorities identified through community health assessment processes
- Serves on boards and committees of other community organizations to assure that the District Board of Health is fully integrated into the local public health system, e.g., Access Health Mahoning Valley, HM Health Partners Board of Directors Committees
- Chairs District Board of Health Quality Improvement Committee and champions QI processes throughout the organization
- Chairs the Mahoning County Child Fatality Review Board; assures that the Review Board complies with statutory reporting requirements and communicates its findings to the community
- Advocates for funding for landfill inspection and well testing programs through active involvement as a member of the Mahoning County Solid Waste Management District Policy Committee
- Educates state and federal legislators and policymakers about funding and policy changes needed to address current and emerging public health problems, e.g., funding for blight removal and stabilization of closed landfills
- Participates in research activities with academic and practice partners to increase the evidence-base for public health practice, e.g., through the Public Health Practice-Based Research Network, presentations at scientific conferences, publications in peer-reviewed journals
- Serves as primary media spokesperson for the organization on public health topics or identifies other subject matter experts for that role if appropriate for a particular topic
- Leads organizational efforts to achieve and maintain local health department accreditation from the Public Health Accreditation Board
- Coaches and supports managers and staff to help them achieve organizational and personal improvement goals and identify measures of success; creates and promotes leadership development and succession planning opportunities for managers and staff
- Communicates regularly and frequently with Board of Health members, managers, staff, external stakeholders, and the public through in-person meetings, community forums, email, newsletters and written reports about trends and events of importance to the organization and the public
- Actively involves herself/himself in peer professional organizations, e.g., National Association of County and City Health Officials, Association of Ohio Health Commissioners, Ohio Public Health Association, American Public Health Association
- Actively involves herself/himself in stakeholder organizations, e.g., Mahoning County Township Association; regularly attends business and social meetings
- Continuously monitors organizational climate through surveys, focus groups and other media to assure a high level of staff morale and performance
- Assesses job performance of direct reports on an annual basis or more frequently if necessary and identifies opportunities for individual performance improvement
- Drafts and reviews local public health regulations that address emerging public health problems for adoption by the Board of Health

- Convenes administrative hearings with individuals and business entities subject to enforcement action in order to resolve complaints and avoid escalated enforcement action, i.e., Board of Health orders or court action
- Identifies and recruits community members for service on organizational advisory boards and committees
- Prepares agendas and meeting materials for Board of Health meetings and meetings of its committees
- Assures that regulatory staff meet regularly with the regulated community to obtain feedback about how to improve regulatory policies and decision-making
- Mobilizes support among the public and policymakers for public policy changes that improve health, e.g., Issue 5 – the Ohio Smokefree Workplace Act
- Reviews hiring/firing recommendations from managers and makes hiring recommendations to the Board of Health
- Seeks opportunities to increase workforce diversity through strategies contained in the organization’s affirmative action plan
- Promotes the Organizational Code of Ethics by encouraging board members, managers and staff to bring ethical questions to the Ethics Advisory Committee for timely discussion and recommendation
- Convenes and staffs the Health District Advisory Council and Licensing Council in close consultation with the Council Chairs
- Consults frequently with municipal leaders from contract cities, i.e., Campbell, Canfield, Struthers, to assure that mutual expectations for public health services are being met
- Represents the Board of Health as a member director of Access Health Mahoning Valley
- Organizes new community collaborations, coalitions and initiatives to address emerging public health issues, e.g., Mahoning Valley Covering Kids and Families Coalition

ORGANIZATIONAL REQUIREMENTS:

- Master’s Degree in Public Health from a CEPH-accredited academic program
- National Incident Management System (NIMS)/Incident Command System (ICS) 100, 700, 300, 400 and IC20.11 (Diversity Training) certification within six months of appointment
- Institutional Review Board Basis Course certification, CITI Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative within six months of appointment
- valid Ohio driver’s license

PREREQUISITE EXPERIENCE: the Health Commissioner shall have a minimum of five years previous experience in senior management or leadership positions in a health department or other health care organization.

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS: the person appointed as commissioner shall be a licensed physician, licensed dentist, a licensed veterinarian, licensed podiatrist, licensed chiropractor, or the holder of a master’s degree in public health or an equivalent master’s degree in a related health field as determined by the members of the board of health in a general health district. He [she] shall be secretary of the board, and shall devote such time to the duties of his [her] office as may be fixed by contract with the board. The commissioner shall be the executive officer of the board and shall carry out all orders of the board and of the [Ohio] department of health. He [she] shall be charged with the enforcement of all sanitary laws and regulations in the district. The commissioner shall keep the public informed in regard to all matters affecting the health of the district. *[Ohio Revised Code Section 3709.11]*

COMPETENCIES AND SKILLS: the Health Commissioner possesses skill levels in these priority Core Competencies for Public Health Professionals appropriate for the senior management level:ⁱⁱ

Analytical/Assessment Skills

- Reviews health status assessments of populations and their related determinants of health conducted by the Board of Health and other organizations
- Expands access to public health data and information for the Board of Health, staff and public
- Ensures the application of ethical principles in the collection, maintenance, use, and dissemination of data and information
- Integrates the findings from quantitative and qualitative data into organizational operations
- Determines community specific trends from quantitative and qualitative data
- Uses information technology effectively to collect, store, and retrieve data

Policy Development/Program Planning Skills

- Evaluates information relevant to specific public health policy issues
- Identifies policy options for the organization using knowledge of Ohio public health law
- Develops policy for the organization with guidance from the Board of Health
- Ensures public health programs are consistent with public health laws and regulations
- Ensures that public health laws are enforced fairly and consistently
- Ensures the consistency of policy integration into organizational plans, procedures, structures, and programs
- Integrates emerging trends of the fiscal, social and political environment into public health strategic planning

Communication Skills

- Communicates in writing and orally, in person, and through electronic means, with linguistic and cultural proficiency
- Ensures that the public health organization seeks input from other organizations and individuals
- Ensures a variety of approaches are considered and used to disseminate public health information
- Applies communication and group dynamic strategies in interactions with individuals and groups
- Communicates the role of the local health department to other entities within the public health system

Cultural Competency Skills

- Ensures that the organization has strategies for interacting with persons from diverse backgrounds
- Ensures the consideration of the role of cultural, social, and behavioral factors in the accessibility, availability, acceptability and delivery of public health services
- Promotes diversity in the public health workforce

Community Dimensions of Practice Skills

- Establishes linkages with key stakeholders
- Ensures the collaboration and partnerships of key stakeholders through the development of formal and informal agreements
- Maintains partnerships with key stakeholders, especially elected officials from the townships and municipalities served by the Board of Health
- Integrates the role of governmental and non-governmental organizations in the delivery of public health services
- Negotiates for the use of community assets and resources through MOUs and other formal and informal agreements

- Defends public health policies, programs, and resources

Public Health Sciences Skills

- Incorporates the Core Public Health Functions and Ten Essential Services of Public Health into the practice of the public health sciences
- Applies the basic public health sciences (including, but not limited to biostatistics, epidemiology, environmental health sciences, health services administration, and social and behavioral health sciences) to public health policies and programs
- Integrates a review of the scientific evidence related to a public health issue, concern, or, intervention into public health practice

Financial Planning and Management Skills

- Assists the Board of Health in managing its governance, proceedings, member orientation and continuing education
- Ensures that programs are managed within current and forecasted budget constraints
- Critiques strategies for determining budget priorities
- Recommends budgetary priorities for the organization
- Establishes a performance management system

Leadership and Systems Thinking Skills

- Incorporates ethical standards of practice into all interactions with organizations, communities, and individuals
- Advocates for individual, team and organizational learning opportunities within the organization
- Ensures the measuring, reporting and continuous improvement of organizational performance
- Ensures organizational practices are in concert with changes in the public health system, and the larger social, political, and economic environment
- Ensures the effective management of organizational change

Revised August 2011

ⁱ Adapted from the Public Health Leadership Competency Framework, National Public Health Leadership Development Network. Wright K, Rowitz L, Merkle A, et al. Competency development in public health leadership. *Am J Public Health*. 2000;90: 1202–1207.

ⁱⁱ Adapted from the Core Competencies for Public Health Professionals, Council on Linkages between Academia and Public Health Practice. These Competencies were ranked as the top three priorities in each of the eight domains for 2011-2014 through a survey of District Board of Health members and managers. More than three priority competencies appear in most domains because some competencies were ranked equally.