



The Role of the Pennsylvania Secretary of Health

The Secretary of Health is a cabinet-level position. The Secretary is the top health regulator in Pennsylvania and serves as a liaison to the Governor for the Pennsylvania Department of Health.

He/she is responsible for carrying out the department's mission to promote healthy lifestyles, prevent injury and disease and assure the safe delivery of quality health care for all Pennsylvanians. The Secretary is charged with working collaboratively with public and private partners to promote prevention and wellness and establish preparedness in pursuit of the optimal health of all Pennsylvanians and the retention of the critical individuals who provide care to our citizens.

He/she sets overall policy and direction; defines the department's mission; establishes strategic goals; outlines specific objectives; prepares annual budgets for submission to the Governor; identifies priorities and accountability in fiscal matters; proposes initiatives to further department objectives; and represents the department and the administration before other state agencies, the Legislature, professional organizations, the health industry, community and stakeholder groups, consumers and the general public.

The Secretary is the chief executive officer of the department, directing the Office of the Executive Deputy Secretary, Physician General, Policy Office, Legislative Liaison Office, Communications Office and Chief Counsel. He/she also oversees the actions of four deputies and the bureaus within their areas, including:

- **Quality Assurance**
Quality Assurance contains the Bureau of Facility Licensure and Certification, Bureau of Community Program Licensure and Certification and Bureau of Managed Care. This area assures the delivery of quality health care in most health care facilities and substance abuse treatment centers in Pennsylvania; approves building, engineering, and construction plans for these facilities; and certifies managed care organizations in conjunction with the Insurance Department.
- **Health Planning and Assessment**
Health Planning and Assessment contains the Bureau of Emergency Medical Services, Office of Public Health Preparedness, Bureau of Epidemiology, Bureau of Laboratories, Bureau of Health Planning and Bureau of Community Health Systems. This area is responsible for monitoring, tracking, and analyzing the health status of Pennsylvania communities. This includes the development and implementation of a statewide Health Improvement Plan; the coordination and support of Pennsylvania's preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation activities during public health emergencies; management of the state laboratories and licensing of independent clinical labs; supervision of emergency medical services throughout Pennsylvania; and oversight of epidemiological data and analysis.
- **Promotion and Disease Prevention**
Promotion and Disease Prevention contains the Bureau of Drug and Alcohol Programs, Bureau

of Health Promotion and Risk Reduction, Bureau of Communicable Diseases and Bureau of Family Health. This area funnels significant federal grant dollars for the development and implementation of a wide variety of educational, preventative and treatment programs for topics such as communicable diseases; family health and infant nutrition programs; HIV/AIDS; cancer; and tobacco, drug, and alcohol abuse.

- **Administration**

Administration contains the Bureau of Administrative and Financial Services, Bureau of Human Resources, Bureau of Health Statistics and Research, and the Bureau of Information Technology. This area directs and manages administrative and support functions, including financial and personnel management, information technology and data processing for the Department. It also develops administrative policies and procedures for the Department and oversees vital records and statistical registries which are accessed by public customers.

In addition, numerous boards provide advice and consultation to the Department, including but not limited to: Statewide Advisory Committee for Public Health Preparedness; Health Policy Board; Pennsylvania Advisory Council on Drug and Alcohol Abuse; and the Drug, Device, and Cosmetic Board.

The Secretary of Health also sits on and/or co-chairs the following committees, including but not limited to:

- Economic Development Committee of the Cabinet
- Environmental Quality Board
- Farm Safety and Occupational Health Advisory Board
- Governor's Food Safety Council
- Governor's Pandemic Advisory Council
- Governor's Traffic Safety Council
- Governor's Preparedness Interagency Executive Management Committee
- Health Policy Board
- Interagency Council on Food and Nutrition
- Pennsylvania Council for Sexual Minorities
- Pennsylvania Emergency Health Services Council
- Pennsylvania Emergency Response Commission
- State Board of Medicine

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