

Shirley E. Olson

H.B. No. 5457

Public Health Committee

02 March 2016

I wish to thank the committee for taking on this challenge of district health departments.

My name is Shirley Olson. I am a licensed registered nurse and hold a BSN and MBA. I live in Portland, a member of Chatham Health District.

When I was beginning nursing school, very early we were taught the World Health Organization (WHO) definition of health. "Health is a state of physical and mental well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."

Based upon my personal experience, I readily agree with the intent of H.B. No. 5457 (Raised) **Statement of Purpose.** Given the recent problems and events in the Chatham Health District, it is necessary to improve supervision, oversight, and enforcement by the Department of Public Health (DPH). At the time of Mr. King's abrupt retirement, I was quite disappointed that DPH did not appoint an outside, experienced Interim Director, who could objectively evaluate the entire system.

Further, without a licensed physician with public health credentials as CEO, how can specific ongoing health issues/problems and trends as well as emerging health issues/problems be identified/diagnosed?

If I applied for a health district position and my clinical skills/expertise were required, I would ask to whom I would report. If the answer was a *nonclinical intermediary*, I would not take the position. Professional health licenses are the jurisdiction of DPH. Would DPH protect in me in the case of an incident based upon *someone else's* decision making?

I worked in three large major health insurers in roles requiring clinical decision making, I always had direct access to a physician.

I believe there is much more to be reviewed.

Respectfully,
Shirley E. Olson