

Questions For Department of Public Health (DPH) Commissioner Nominee

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March 29, 2019 | 2019-R-0061

Commissioner of Public Health (CGS §§ [19a-1a](#), [-1d](#) and [-2a](#))

The commissioner is responsible for the department's overall operation and administration. To this end, he or she must use the most efficient and practical means to prevent and suppress disease; contract for facilities, services, and programs to implement the department's purposes; secure, compile, and disseminate data on prevention and control of epidemics; annually issue a list of reportable diseases, emergency illnesses and health conditions, and reportable laboratory findings; inspect health care institutions; and oversee local health directors.

Questions

1. Please describe the mission of DPH as you see it. As commissioner, how will you ensure that the department meets this mission? What particular experience, expertise, knowledge, and skills do you bring to this task?
2. Tell us how your recent experiences serving as executive director for Cougar Health Services at Washington State University and section chief of DPH's Community, Family, and Health Equity Section have helped prepare you to be the commissioner. What did you learn in these positions that will be useful to you in your new role?
3. How would you prioritize the public health issues facing the state?
4. Do you believe that the department has the adequate resources, in terms of both personnel and budget, to meet its statutory obligations?

5. How is the scope of practice review committee process working? (Under a process established in 2011, review committees created by DPH evaluate requests by health care professions seeking to change or establish a scope of practice; the review committees provide findings to the Public Health Committee.) Do you recommend any changes to this process?
6. [PA 18-168](#) delayed, until January 1, 2019, the department's adoption of the federal Food and Drug Administration's Food Code as the state's food code for regulating food establishments. How has this delay impacted the state's food establishments? What is the status of the implementing regulations?
7. The department recently confirmed a second case of measles in the state. How is the Connecticut Vaccine Program working? Are you concerned that the number of parents seeking exemptions for their children, while still low, has been increasing in recent years?
8. Do you feel there are disparities in services offered by local health departments and districts? The law requires local health departments and certain districts, within available appropriations, to provide a basic health program consisting of various components as a prerequisite to receiving annual funding from DPH. Would regionalizing local health services further address any disparities?
9. [PA 18-166](#) requires hospitals or EMS personnel that treat a patient for an opioid overdose to report the overdose to DPH. Starting by January 1, 2020, the department must provide the data to the appropriate local health department, as it deems necessary to develop preventive initiatives. Has DPH received such overdose reports? How will the department determine whether to provide this data to local health departments?
10. The legislature has taken various other steps to combat opioid addition in Connecticut, such as increasing access to opioid antagonists (e.g., Narcan) and limiting the amount of opioid drugs that may be prescribed to adults and minors in certain situations. Do you recommend other legislative changes on this issue?
11. Legislation enacted in 2014 banned the sale of e-cigarettes to minors. Some current legislative proposals seek to further regulate e-cigarettes (such as imposing a tax on e-cigarettes apart from the general sales tax and raising the legal age for tobacco and e-cigarette use to 21). How do you think the state should regulate e-cigarettes? What role do you think e-cigarettes play in smoking cessation?

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