

Local Health Directors

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Issue

Are municipalities in Connecticut required to have health directors? What are the required qualifications to be a local health director?

Summary

Connecticut law requires a municipality to either (1) have its own health director or (2) join a district health department with a full-time district health director. Municipalities with a population of 40,000 or more are generally required to have a full-time health director ([CGS §§ 19a-200](#) and [-241](#)).

For both municipal and district health departments, a director appointed on or after October 1, 2010, must (1) be a licensed physician and hold a degree in public health from an accredited institution or (2) hold a graduate degree in public health from an accredited institution ([CGS §§ 19a-200](#) and [-244](#)).

According to the [Department of Public Health](#) (DPH), 45 municipalities have their own health department, with 33 having a full-time health director and 12 having a part-time health director. The other 124 municipalities are members of one of the state's 20 health districts. Over 96% of the state's estimated population lives in a municipality served by a full-time health director (either a municipal or district director).

Municipal Health Directors

By law, unless a municipality's charter provides otherwise, the chief official of a municipality (city, town, or borough) must nominate a person to be director of health, for confirmation by the board of

selectmen, legislative body, or borough burgess as applicable. Municipal health directors serve four-year terms.

If the municipality's population is at least 40,000 for five consecutive years, the health director must (1) serve full-time, unless the town has designated the director as the chief medical advisor for its public schools, and (2) not have any financial interest in or engage in any employment, transaction, or professional activity that substantially conflicts with the proper discharge of his or her duties ([CGS § 19a-200](#)).

District Health Directors

The law also allows municipalities, after a public hearing and vote by their legislative bodies, to join together to form district health departments, managed by a board with representatives from the member municipalities ([CGS § 19a-241](#)). The board must appoint a district health director, with approval from DPH. (DPH appoints the director if the board fails to do so within 60 days of the district's formation or a vacancy.) Upon the district director's appointment, the terms of office of the health directors of the member municipalities terminate ([CGS § 19a-242](#)).

A district health director must serve full-time. District health directors are subject to the same restrictions on outside activities as apply to health directors of large municipalities (see above). A district's board sets the director's term of office, up to three years ([CGS § 19a-244](#)).

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