

## **Guidance for Medical Officer Appointments in Colorado Local Public Health Agencies**

If the public health director is not a licensed physician, a designated medical officer (advisor) shall be employed or contracted (paid or volunteer) by the district or county board of health to advise the public health director on medical decisions and be available at all times to the public health director. This guidance outlines requirements and considerations in appointing a medical officer, given that the duties vary depending on the scope and type of services offered by the local public health agency.

### **Statutory requirements for medical officer C.R.S. § 25-1-508 and 6 CCR 1014-6**

- Currently licensed to practice medicine in Colorado without conditions, restrictions, or letters of admonition from any Medical Board
- Graduate of approved medical school (MD or DO)

### **Preferred Qualifications**

- The Medical Officer should possess, along with medical expertise, interest, knowledge, and expertise in public health, prevention, and working to improve the community's health.
- Particular knowledge may include being board certified in Preventive Medicine, holding a master in public health or completion of public health coursework. If not board certified in Public Health and Preventive Medicine; board certified in a primary care specialty is preferred.
- Knowledgeable of public health related statutes, related Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment policies and procedures, and related Board of Health rules.

### **Insurance, liability and registrations**

- Colorado Governmental Immunity, Article 10 of Title 24, C.R.S. for duties performed for the agency
- Optional, but required for certain clinical services and grant applications and if recommended by the medical officer's medical malpractice/liability insurer.
  - Physician Professional Liability Insurance
  - Unrestricted Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) registration

### **Contract considerations**

- Duration of contract – many local public health agencies create an annual contract, which they present to the Board of Health for approval
- Estimation of time commitment
- Anticipated scope of duties – see below
- Termination of contract details
- Any conflicts of interest

**Compensation arrangements** depend on the size of the agency, scope of duties, estimation of time commitment and negotiation with provider and agency (hours and dollar figures are examples only)

- Staff-Paid part-time or full-time employee (e.g. larger agencies)
- Contract
  - Hourly (~\$100-\$150 per hour), usually set with a monthly or annual maximum (e.g. \$1,000 to \$1,500 monthly or \$20,000 per year)
  - Monthly, with set maximum hours of service ( e.g. 10 hours per month), with an hourly rate for additional hours
  - Annual total contract
- Volunteer

The list below includes a list of potential scope of work and job duties that are reasonable expectations for the role of medical officer, though dependent on the actual time commitment in the contract.

### **General Functions:**

- At a minimum, advise the public health director of the Local Public Health Agency and local Board of Health on medical issues and medical decisions affecting public health, sign needed protocols, and be available in a public health emergency.
- Connect medical practice to public health practice by providing consultation, technical assistance and medical advice to public health director, local public health agency staff, and the Board of Health in areas such as:
  - evidence based health promotion, worksite wellness and chronic disease prevention programs
  - communicable diseases surveillance prevention and control, and human health hazard control (i.e. public health emergencies; human health hazards; disease outbreaks; epidemics; pandemics; and threats to the health of the public through atypical manifestations of current, emerging, and re-emerging communicable diseases or human health hazards)
  - emerging public health issues and concerns in the local public health agency's jurisdiction (i.e. marijuana, mold, prescription drug overuse)
- Offer education and training, as needed, to public health director, local public health agency, Board of Health, or community
- Serve as a liaison in building effective collaborative partnerships between the local public health agency and local medical and health care providers to promote the health and safety of the community
- Respond to media inquiries, as appropriate
- Participate in the community health assessment process and provide medical and public health expertise during the creation and implementation of local public health improvement plan; participate in agency strategic planning, and quality improvement initiatives.
- Review the county Emergency Preparedness Plan annually and provide recommendations for improvements

### **Specific Functions and Duties:**

- If appointed medical director for specific programs for CDPHE or others, will adhere to required policies, procedures and other guidance materials
- Offer medical oversight, consultation and recommendations, as needed
- Co-signs recommendations of the nursing personnel and/or nurse practitioners
- Adheres to the state statute regarding mandatory reporting of child abuse, child sexual assault, and domestic violence
- Maintains confidentiality, adheres to local public health agency HIPAA policies
- Approve various medical protocols, including (but not limited to): anaphylaxis protocols, immunizations, etc.
- Provide recommendations on orders/prescriptions for clients needing disease control services, such as specimen collection, testing, and antibiotic prophylaxis, as needed
- If required by program, monthly review of (a certain percentage) of patient records
- Meet with staff on a regular basis to provide consultation, guidance, and training on disease surveillance, investigation, prevention, and control strategies
- Provide consultative services, as needed, during large disease outbreaks.
- In the event of an emergency, assist Public Health Agency staff in securing the cooperation of key health partners in planning and implementing a mass prophylaxis clinic (liaison); additionally, provide on-site physician services for community mass prophylaxis clinics (as outlined in the Public Health Emergency Operations Plan)

**Additional considerations:**

- If the local public health agency bills for services, a section of the job duties should be devoted to supervision or responsibilities related to those services, and additional requirements such as DEA registration(to order any pharmaceuticals including vaccines from a private vendor), provider number for Medicaid and Medicare Services and malpractice insurance for billing.
- If the local public health agency offers Family Planning Services, a separate contract meeting the Title X Family Planning Services Guidance is required. The medical officer may be a separate position from the Family Planning medical director.