



United Counties Council of Illinois
217 East Monroe ~ Suite 101
Springfield, Illinois 62701

217.544.5585

W. Michael McCreery, Executive Director

Officers/Executive Committee Members

- David Meyer, President
- David Zimmerman, Vice President
- Joseph Payette, Secretary
- P.E. Cross, Treasurer
- Matthew Prochaska
- Mark Kern
- Samuel Newton

November 19, 2020

To: UCCI Membership

Re: **County Health Board Executive Requirements**

Question

What are the requirements to be the executive officer of the county health department, commonly known as the county director of public health?

Analysis

The board of health¹ of each county or multiple-county health department shall, immediately after appointment, meet and organize, by the election of one of its number as president and one as secretary, and either from its number or otherwise, a treasurer and such other officers as it may deem necessary.² Additionally, the board of health is required to appoint an executive officer who shall either be a “medical health officer” or a “public health administrator” as set forth in the Illinois Department of Public Health. Specifically, Section 5-25013(A)(10)³ of the Counties Code states that the board of health shall:

Appoint a medical health officer as the executive officer for the department, who shall be a citizen of the United States and shall possess such qualifications as may be prescribed by the State Department of Public Health; or appoint a public health administrator who shall possess such qualifications as may be prescribed by the State Department of Public Health as the executive officer for the department, provided that the board of health shall make available medical supervision which is considered adequate by the Director of Public Health.

¹ It should be noted that the composition of the board of health is set forth at 55 ILCS 5/5-25012. In most cases, the members of a board of health are appointed by the president or chairman of the county board, with the approval of the county board. However, if a county with a population of 240,000 or more inhabitants does not currently have a county health department, it may, by resolution of the county board, establish a board of health consisting of the members of such board.

² 55 ILCS 5/5-25013(A).

³ 55 ILCS 5/5-25013(A)(10); see also 77 Ill. Admin. Code § 600.300(a) (requiring a certified local health department to have an executive officer).

The regulations require a “Medical Health Officer” to possess, at a minimum, the following education and experience⁴:

- (1) A master's degree in public health from a college or university accredited by the North Central Association or other regional, nationally-recognized accrediting agency or the equivalent experience in the health field, preferably public health;
- (2) A license to practice medicine in all of its branches in Illinois; **and**
- (3) Two years of full-time administrative experience in public health administration.

Additionally, “[c]ertification in Public Health by the American Board of Preventive Medicine or board certification in a related specialty is desirable but not required.”⁵

A “Public Health Administrator” is required to possess, at a minimum, the following education and experience⁶:

- (1) A master’s degree in public health from a college or university accredited by the North Central Association or other regional, nationally-recognized accrediting agency and two years of full-time administrative experience in public health;
- (2) A graduate degree in a related field from a college or university accredited by the North Central Association or other regional, nationally-recognized accrediting agency, which may include but shall not be limited to a master's degree in public administration, nursing, environmental health, community health, health education, and two years of full-time administrative experience in public health; **or**
- (3) A bachelor’s degree from a college or university accredited by the North Central Association or other regional, nationally-recognized accrediting agency, and four years of full-time administrative experience, of which at least two years must be in public health.

“If the executive officer of the local health department is a Public Health Administrator, medical supervision shall be made available by the local board of health as applicable. A physician licensed to practice medicine in all its branches in Illinois shall be available for consulting with the Public Health Administrator.”⁷

It should also be noted that the process for obtaining approval of the qualifications of the executive officer from the Illinois Department of Public Health is set forth in 77 Ill. Adm. Code § 600.300.

⁴ 77 Ill. Admin. Code § 600.320(a).

⁵ 77 Ill. Admin. Code § 600.320(c).

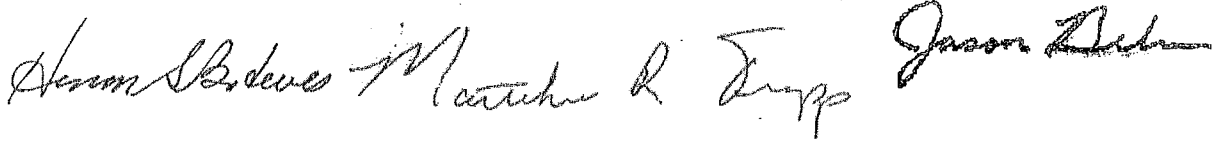
⁶ 77 Ill. Admin. Code § 600.310(a).

⁷ Ill. Admin. Code § 600.300(e).

Conclusion

A local board of health is required to have an executive officer who is either a Medical Health Officer or Public Administrator as defined by the regulations cited above. Additionally, there is a process set forth in 77 Ill. Adm. Code § 600.300 that the local health department must follow for obtaining IDPH approval of the qualifications of the person who will serve as the local health department's executive officer.

At the request and direction of UCCI this opinion was prepared by
GIFFIN, WINNING, COHEN & BODEWES, P.C.



Herman G. Bodewes

Matthew R. Trapp

Jason E. Brokaw

Disclaimer: This opinion was prepared by Giffin, Winning, Cohen and Bodewes, P.C., at the request of UCCI and is to be used solely by UCCI and its members. The State's Attorney is the attorney for the County. Legal advice, if requested, should be sought from the State's Attorney.