

LOCAL HEALTH AUTHORITY OVERVIEW

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES



**Texas Public Health Association
91st Annual Education Conference
February 23, 2015**

OVERVIEW

- × Local Health Authorities
 - + Qualifications
 - + Appointment Process of a Local Health Authority
 - + Term of Office
 - + Duties
- × Jurisdictions with No Health Department and No Health Authority
- × Interface Between Local Health Authority and Local Health Director
- × Impact of Current Policies and Legal Guidelines

WHAT IS A HEALTH AUTHORITY?

A health authority is a physician appointed under the provisions of Chapter 121 of the Health and Safety Code to administer state and local laws relating to public health within the appointing body's jurisdiction.

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QUALIFICATIONS OF A HEALTH AUTHORITY

A Health Authority:

- 1) Must be a competent physician with a reputable professional standing qualified to practice medicine in Texas.
- 2) Must be a resident of Texas.
- 3) Must take and subscribe to the official oath.
- 4) Must file a copy of the oath and appointment with the state.

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APPOINTMENT OF A HEALTH AUTHORITY

REQUIRED FORMS

- ✦ **Statement of Appointed Officer**
 Must be completed and signed by newly appointed LHA and submitted to your respective DSHS Health Service Regional Office before the Oath of Office and Certificate of Appointment forms can be completed.
- ✦ **Certificate of Appointment**
 Must be completed by elected official within the jurisdiction and mailed to your respective DSHS Regional Office with LHA Oath of Office form.
- ✦ **LHA Oath of Office**
 Must be completed by LHA and seal of the person administering the oath should be visible. Form should be mailed to DSHS Regional Office with Certificate of Appointment.

<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/rls/lha/>

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THE STATE OF TEXAS

Statement of Elected/Appointed Officer

(Please type or print legibly)

I _____ do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I have not directly or indirectly paid, offered, promised to pay, contributed, or promised to contribute any money or thing of value, or promised any public office or employment for the giving or withholding of a vote at the election at which I was elected or as a reward to secure my appointment or confirmation, whichever the case may be, so help me God.

Affianted Signature

Printed Name

Position to Which Elected/Appointed

City and/or County

SWORN TO and subscribed before me by affiant on this ____ day of _____ 20__.

Signature of Person Authorized to Administer Oaths/Affidavits

(See 2)

Printed Name

Title

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Certificate of Appointment For a Local Health Authority

I, _____, acting in the capacity as a

(Check the appropriate designation below)

- Non-physician and the Local Health Department Director
- Mayor or Designee
- County Judge of Designee
- Chairperson of the Public Health District

do hereby certify the physician, _____, who is licensed by the Texas Board of Medical Examiners, was duly appointed as the Local Health Authority for _____, Texas.

Date term of office begins _____, 20__

Date term of office ends _____, 20__, unless removed by law.

The Local Health Authority has been appointed and approved by the:

(Check the appropriate designation below)

- Director, _____
- City Council for the City of _____
- Commissioners Court for _____ County
- Board of Health for the _____ Public Health District

I certify to the above information on this the _____ day of _____, 20__.

Signature of appointing official



OATH OF OFFICE For Local Health Authorities in the State of Texas

I, _____, do solemnly swear (or affirm), that I will faithfully execute the duties of the office of Health Authority of the State of Texas and will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States and of this State, so help me God.

Affiant

Mailing Address ZIP

(Area Code) Phone Number

SWORN TO and subscribed before me this _____ day of _____, 20__.

Signature of Person Administering Oath

(Seal)

Printed Name

Title

(See reverse side for instructions)

TERM OF OFFICE

A health authority serves for a term of two years and may be appointed to successive terms.

If reappointed, forms must be completed and submitted again.

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DUTIES OF A HEALTH AUTHORITY

Chapter 121 Texas Health and Safety Code
<http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/HS/htm/HS.121.htm>

- ✘ A health authority is a state officer when performing duties prescribed by state law.
- ✘ A health authority shall perform each duty that is necessary to implement and enforce a law to protect the public health.

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DUTIES OF A HEALTH AUTHORITY

- ✦ Establish, maintain, and enforce quarantine in the health authority's jurisdiction.
- ✦ Conduct local quarantine, inspection, disease prevention and suppression, birth and death statistics, and general sanitation in the health authority's jurisdiction.

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DUTIES OF A HEALTH AUTHORITY

- ✦ Report the presence of contagious, infectious, and dangerous epidemic diseases in the health authority's jurisdiction to DSHS in the manner and at the times prescribed by DSHS.
- ✦ Report on any subject on which DSHS directs that a report be made.

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DUTIES OF A HEALTH AUTHORITY

- ✘ Enforcement of the following in the health authority's jurisdiction:
 - + (A) proper rules, requirements, and ordinances
 - + (B) sanitation laws
 - + (C) quarantine rules
 - + (D) vital statistics collections

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JURISDICTIONS WITH NO HEALTH DEPARTMENT OR HEALTH AUTHORITY

- ✘ A county without a local health department is not obligated to have a local health authority.
- ✘ A DSHS Regional Medical Director shall perform the duties of a health authority in a jurisdiction where there is no local health authority or where a health authority fails to perform the duties.
- ✘ No monetary contribution is required by a jurisdiction to sustain a local health authority.

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INTERFACE BETWEEN LOCAL HEALTH AUTHORITY AND LOCAL HEALTH DIRECTOR

- ✘ The governing body of a municipality or the commissioners court of a county shall appoint the director of the municipality's or county's local health department.
- ✘ The director is the chief administrative officer of the local health department.

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INTERFACE BETWEEN LOCAL HEALTH AUTHORITY AND LOCAL HEALTH DIRECTOR

- ✘ If the director is a physician, the director is the health authority in the local health department's jurisdiction.
- ✘ If the director is not a physician the director shall appoint a physician as the health authority, subject to the approval of the governing body or the commissioners court.

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IMPACT OF CURRENT POLICIES AND LEGAL GUIDELINES

✦ STRENGTHS

- + The system between the local health authority, regional health authority and the commissioner of DSHS has been in place since 1989.
- + During public health emergencies there is a partnership between the local health department/health authority, the regional office and DSHS central to determine the best course of action during public health emergencies.

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IMPACT OF CURRENT POLICIES AND LEGAL GUIDELINES

✦ LIMITATIONS

- + Currently a court order is required to enforce a LHA quarantine order. This can delay enforcement allowing sick or exposed persons to leave the jurisdiction.

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 **TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF STATE HEALTH SERVICES**

P.O. Box 149347
Austin, Texas 78714-9347
1-888-963-7111
TTY: 1-800-735-2989
www.dshs.state.tx.us

DAVID L. LAKEY, M.D.
COMMISSIONER

Movement of Healthcare Workers Who Cared for Infected Healthcare Workers With Ebola

Due to the current possible exposure of healthcare workers at Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital Dallas (HCWs) to Ebola and the need to closely monitor them, the following measures should be communicated to the HCWs by the public health personnel:

1. HCWs who entered the room(s) of his or her healthcare worker colleague(s) with Ebola cannot travel by commercial transportation until 21 days after the HCW's last exposure. These HCWs should not travel by commercial conveyances (e.g. airplane, ship, long-distance bus, or train). Local use of public transportation (e.g. taxi, bus) by asymptomatic individuals should be discussed with the public health authority.
2. All HCWs involved in the direct care of his or her healthcare worker colleague(s) with Ebola must be monitored twice a day with one of the monitoring sessions being a face to face encounter. As part of that monitoring, each HCW's temperature will be checked twice a day;
3. All HCWs who provided direct care in the room(s) of his or her healthcare worker colleague(s) with Ebola, will be given the opportunity to stay at Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital Dallas on a non-admission status in order to facilitate monitoring; and
4. Any HCW that does not adhere to monitoring or any of these other measures may be subject to a communicable disease control order.


David L. Lahey, M.D.
Commissioner
Department of State Health Services

10/18/14
Date

Presented to HCW by: _____ Print name and title
Signature _____ Date _____

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 **TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF STATE HEALTH SERVICES**

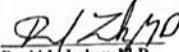
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DAVID L. LAKEY, M.D.
COMMISSIONER

Movement of Personnel Who Had Indirect Contact With Ebola Patients

Due to the current possible indirect exposure of Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital- Dallas Personnel (including lab personnel or other personnel that handled containers of an Ebola Patient's blood or other bodily fluids) (Personnel) to Ebola and the need to closely monitor those Personnel, the following measures should be communicated to Personnel by the public health staff who are monitoring the Personnel and these measures are to be taken:

1. Personnel who had indirect contact with an Ebola patient cannot travel by commercial transportation until 21 days after that individual's last exposure. These Personnel should not travel by commercial conveyances (e.g. airplane, ship, long-distance bus, or train). Local use of public transportation (e.g. taxi, bus) by asymptomatic individuals should be discussed with the public health authority.
2. Personnel who had indirect contact with an Ebola patient must be monitored twice a day with one of the monitoring sessions being a face to face encounter. As part of that monitoring, each one of the Personnel's temperature will be checked twice a day;
3. Any of the Personnel that do not adhere to monitoring or any of these other measures may be subject to a communicable disease control order.


David L. Lahey, M.D.
Commissioner
Department of State Health Services

10/18/14
Date

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Movement of Persons Who Were Within Three (3) Feet of Healthcare Worker on Airplane

Due to the possible exposure of Individuals to Ebola as a result of the individuals having been within three (3) feet of a healthcare worker who was later diagnosed with Ebola who flew on a commercial airline flight to and from Dallas, Texas and Cleveland, Ohio (Individuals), and the need to closely monitor those Individuals, the following measures should be communicated to those Individuals by the public health staff who are monitoring the Individuals and these measures are to be taken:

1. Individuals on the airplane who were within three (3) feet of a healthcare worker who was later diagnosed with Ebola cannot travel by commercial transportation until 21 days after that Individual's last exposure to the healthcare worker who flew on the airplane. These Individuals should not travel by commercial conveyances (e.g. airplane, ship, long-distance bus, or train). Local use of public transportation (e.g. taxi, bus) by asymptomatic Individuals should be discussed with the public health authority.
2. Individuals on the airplane who were within three (3) feet of a healthcare worker who was later diagnosed with Ebola must go to any location where members of the public congregate which includes but is not limited to, restaurants, grocery stores, theaters, or other places where the public may be in attendance or gather, throughout the entire 21 day time period that follows the Individual's last exposure to the healthcare worker who flew on the airplane.
3. Individuals on the airplane who were within three (3) feet of a healthcare worker who was later diagnosed with Ebola must be monitored twice a day with one of the monitoring sessions being a face to face encounter. As part of that monitoring, each Individual's temperature will be checked twice a day.
4. Individuals that do not adhere to monitoring or any of these other measures may be subject to a communicable disease control order.


David L. Lakey, M.D.
Commissioner
Department of State Health Services

10/18/14
Date

Presented to Individual by: _____ Print name and title
 _____ Signature _____ Date

IMPACT OF CURRENT POLICIES AND LEGAL GUIDELINES

✱ LIMITATIONS

- + Not every county has a health authority.
- + Small county health authorities do not have a great deal of experience in handling public health issues.

IMPACT OF CURRENT POLICIES AND LEGAL GUIDELINES

✦ GAPS

- + DSHS regional directors act as the default local health authority in areas that do not have one. If a widespread public health event should occur DSHS regional directors will have limited capacity to cover responsibilities for multiple counties.

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RESOURCES

DSHS Regional and Local Health Services

<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/rls>

Texas Health Steps

<http://www.txhealthsteps.com/cms/?q=catalog/course/2113>

DSHS Communicable Disease Control Measures Manual

<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/rls/lha/communicabledisease.shtm>

Texas Legislature Online

www.capitol.state.tx.us/statutes/statutes.html

<http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/HS/htm/HS.121.htm>

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Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

QUESTIONS?

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