



May 4, 2018

Dear Colleagues:

As Commissioner of the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) and a pediatrician, I am seeking your partnership in implementing good antimicrobial stewardship practices in our state.

Antibiotic resistance is a serious and growing public health threat. The use of antibiotics is the single most important factor contributing to the worldwide problem. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that more than 2 million Americans are infected with antibiotic-resistant organisms each year, resulting in 23,000 deaths. Twenty to 50 percent of all antibiotics prescribed in U.S. acute care hospitals are either unnecessary or inappropriate.

Antimicrobial stewardship is an interdisciplinary activity that improves the selection of antimicrobial therapy (correct drug, dose, and duration), and antibiotic stewardship programs (ASPs) have been shown to reduce the overall burden of antibiotic resistance, improve individual patient outcomes, and decrease health care costs.

In the fight against antimicrobial resistance, I am committed to promoting the establishment of ASPs, based on the CDC's [seven core elements of an ASP](#), in every inpatient and outpatient health care facility in Texas. To support these efforts, DSHS has an antimicrobial stewardship expert on staff to promote ASPs and assist Texas' health care providers with antimicrobial stewardship activities.

Again, I seek the partnership of all medication prescribers (including health care providers and veterinarians), as well as ranchers and farmers who produce animals for human consumption, to commit to using antibiotics appropriately. Please accept my invitation to join DSHS and local, state, and national stakeholders in the fight against antimicrobial resistance. Together, we can save lives in Texas.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John Hellerstedt". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

John Hellerstedt, M.D.