



## STATE BOARD OF HEALTH

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March 11, 2023

The Honorable J. B. Pritzker  
Governor of Illinois  
207 Statehouse  
Springfield, IL 62706

Dear Governor Pritzker,

State statute (20 ILCS 5/6.06) requires that the State Board of Health (SBOH) submit an annual report to you about our activities and the status of public health policy in the State of Illinois. I am pleased to submit this report on behalf of all the members of the State Board of Health.

Although the morbidity and mortality associated with the SARS-Cov-2 pandemic have seemingly diminished over the past year, new (Respiratory Syncytial Virus) and old (seasonal influenza) challenges brought the calendar year to a close. Additionally, the routine obstacles to safeguarding the health of the public, eliminating health disparities, and creating social and physical environments in which all citizens of Illinois can lead healthy and productive lives persist. In this report, we will touch on some of the highlights of the past year.

### **Oversight of Rules to Enact Legislation and the IDPH Legislative Priorities**

As part of our statutory mandate, the SBOH continued to work with IDPH rules coordinators and the legal department to provide oversight, comments, and suggested revisions to a wide range of legislation that affect public health in Illinois. Our legislative liaison provided quarterly progress updates on the rules that we had previously reviewed. Additionally, the SBOH received updates on IDPH legislative priorities for the upcoming legislative sessions as well as insights as to what legislators may be proposing that would be under the purview of IDPH. During the past year, the SBOH extensively reviewed the following statutes:

- Head and Spinal Injury Code
- Violent Injury Reporting Code
- AIDS Drug Assistance Program

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### **Oversight of Rules to Enact Legislation and the IDPH Legislative Priorities (cont.)**

- Birth Center Demonstration Program Code
- Certification and Operation of Environmental Labs
- Control of Sexually Transmitted Infections Code
- Update on Community Health Workers Certification and Reimbursement Act
- Underserved Physician Workforce Act
- Health Care Worker Background Check Code
- Birth Center Licensing Code
- Assisted Living and Shared Housing Establishment Code
- Visa Waiver Program for International Medical Graduates
- Home Health, Home Service, Home Nursing Agency Code
- Sexual Assault Survivors Emergency Treatment Code

### **IDPH Leadership Change**

The SBOH bade farewell to Director Ezike in March and thanked her for her exceptional service throughout the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic. We praised her professionalism and competence as she helped to guide, with the Governor's office, through a dangerous and unprecedented time. She was a "shining light" in dark times and was an exemplar of clearly communicating policy-based on the best evidence to the people of Illinois. We congratulated her on her tenure and wished her all the best in all future endeavors. She will be missed.

In September, we welcomed Dr. Sameer Vohra as the new leader of the Department. Coming from prior membership on the SBOH, Dr. Vohra is uniquely positioned to take advantage of the breadth of expertise of Board members and immediately set a path for the Department to capitalize on the statutory oversight and advice responsibilities of the SBOH.

### **Quarterly Reports and Updates**

Throughout the year, we received detailed updates and briefings on current public health issues from IDPH staff and other experts regarding:

- Outbreaks affecting the people of Illinois (SARS-CoV-2, MPox, and Respiratory Syncytial Virus)

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### **Quarterly Reports and Updates (cont.)**

- Health Care and Human Services Four Pillars (Criminal Justice Reform; Education and Workforce Development; Economic Access, Equity, and Opportunity; Health Care and Human Services)
- The CDC Infrastructure Grant
- Sudden Unexpected Infant Death
- Cottage Food and Shared Kitchens
- Office of Minority Health
- Office of Men's Health
- Division of Chronic Diseases
- Office of Preparedness and Response

### **SBOH Bylaw updates and revisions**

In 2022, I along with Vice-Chair Dr. JA Herrmann began the process to make our Bylaws more consistent with the authorizing legislation (20 ILCS 5/5-565) that delineates the roles and activities of the SBOH. That update, in consultation with the IDPH Government liaison, passed unanimously during our September, 2023, full Board meeting.

As part of this update, and in recognition of the importance of reviewing administrative rules, all members of the SBOH were automatically included as members of the standing Rules Committee. The inclusion of all members, and their various areas of expertise and perspectives, has resulted in a much more robust discussion of the pending rules with which we are presented.

### **State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP) and State Health Assessment (SHA)**

Per its mandate, the State Board of Health is actively involved in developing a State Health Improvement Plan that engages public, private and voluntary partners in strengthening the public health system infrastructure that is so essential to improving the quality of life in Illinois communities. A multidisciplinary partnership/planning team is appointed to produce the plan and meets monthly in collaboration with the Illinois Public Health Institute, the University of Illinois Extension, and an incredibly dedicated IDPH staff with priorities to include behavioral health, chronic diseases, maternal and child health, emerging diseases and racism as a public health crisis. Since the inception of the SHIP in 2004, members of the SBOH have participated throughout the entire review process. For the current iteration, three SBOH members have been involved in both the SHIP and the SHA.

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### **Ad Hoc Task Forces**

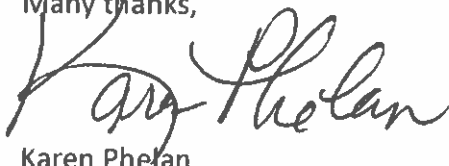
Our State Board of Health welcomes every opportunity to be part of Standing and/or Ad Hoc Task Forces, Work Groups, Committees, and Advisory Councils, and individual Board members served with the following groups during the past year:

- Health Care Access (and hospital closures in urban and rural areas)
- Reducing Silos to Improve Collaboration and Effectiveness Workshop
- Violence Prevention and Suicide
- Community Health Workers Review Board
- Cottage Food Task Force

Additionally, SBOH members consulted with the Medical Director to develop a protocol on the utilization of monoclonal antibody and antiviral therapies for acute SARS-CoV-2 infections, striving to achieve an equitable balance between patient need therapy availability.

In conclusion, the State Board of Health will continue to support the Director, the Assistant Director, IDPH, your Office, and the people of the State of Illinois by fulfilling our statutory advisory mandate designed to improve the health of all people in our great state.

Many thanks,



Karen Phefan  
Chairman

cc: Deputy Governor Sol Flores  
Senate President Don Harmon  
Speaker of the House Emanuel Chris Welch  
IDPH Director Sameer Vohra  
IDPH Assistant Director Amaal Tokars  
State Board of Health Members