

WISCONSIN PUBLIC HEALTH COUNCIL

*Assure safe and healthy people by monitoring progress on the state health plan
and on the readiness for public health emergencies.*

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June 7, 2024

Resolution Requesting Reinstatement of the Wisconsin Department of Health Services Director of Public Health Nursing Position

Whereas, Wisconsin Department of Health Services previously had a Director of Public Health Nursing (DPHN) position, and since the retirement of the last DPHN, the DPHN role representing Wisconsin public health nurses at state and national levels disappeared, and

Whereas the loss of the DPHN role contributed to the lack of a distinct and visible executive clinical advanced practice public health nursing leadership role in the State of Wisconsin, and

Whereas external health entities and stakeholders are not able to access an executive public health nurse leader who has advanced expertise in population and public health, epidemiology, biostatistics, public health and nursing sciences, and health and health care systems thinking, and

Whereas it is acknowledged that there was a lack of a sufficient public health nurse workforce available to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, and of which has been further depleted^{1,2,3,4} and

Whereas the absence of a DPHN contributed to gaps in communication experienced by both internal and external health entities and stakeholders who were unable to access an advanced executive public health nurse serving in the State of Wisconsin's role to discuss interpretation and implementation of nursing practice with significant rapidly changing health recommendations, and

Whereas the DPHN would be in a professional advanced and executive public health nursing practice leadership position as identified by Public Health Nursing Scope and Standards to improve the State of Wisconsin's professional public health nursing practice environment and health outcomes,⁵ and

Whereas the DPHN would be responsible as an advanced, executive Public Health Nursing leader for identifying and addressing organizational and systems factors affecting PH nursing practice^{5,6,7,8,9,10}, and

Whereas the DPHN articulates nursing and public health knowledge and skills to all applicable partners, inclusive of all sections that comprise the public, and especially the interprofessional teams, administrators, educators, policymakers, and others^{5,6}, to assure ethical and equitable provision of care occurs for all Wisconsin populations across the life span,^{11,12,13} and

Whereas the DPHN would assess and evaluate public health nursing practice that integrates organizational, population-focused and systems thinking^{5,6}, to assure the opportunity for all populations to improve their health through implementation of the foundational aspects of public health, and public health 3.0 concepts^{5,6,11,12,13}, and

Whereas the DPHN would function as a chief Public Health Nursing strategist to assure relevant partners work in collaboration to drive prevention initiatives^{5,6,12,13}, and assure public health nursing is represented within interprofessional decisions making bodies^{5,6}, and

Whereas the Public Health Council recognizes and endorses the important role that the State of Wisconsin's DPHN would provide advanced executive public health nursing leadership, guidance and support to state and local units of government who have public health nurses providing critical public health nursing services to residents of the State of Wisconsin, and other directors of nursing in communities, hospitals and clinics, nursing homes, schools, and other healthcare settings, and

Whereas, there are additional public health and public health nursing organizations such as the Wisconsin Association of Public Health (WPHA)-PHN Section ¹⁴, American Public Health Association (APHA)-PHN Section ¹⁵, the Council of Public Health Nursing Organizations (CPHNO) ¹⁶, Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO)¹⁷, National Association of City-County Health Officers (NACCHO) ¹⁸, Association of Community Health Nurse Educators (ACHNE) ^{19,20,21}, Association of Teaching, Prevention and Research (ATPR)²² who support the visibility and importance of the executive public health nursing leadership roles and interventions to assure the health outcomes of populations,

Therefore be it resolved, the Public Health Council acting in its statutorily defined role as an advisory body to the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, the Governor and the Legislature encourages state law and policy makers and administrators to enter into meaningful conversations with the Public Health Council and key public health stakeholders to enhance the health and wellbeing of Wisconsin populations; by recommending the reinstatement of the executive leader position of the Director of Public Health Nursing in Wisconsin, and

Therefore, be it further resolved, a Director of Public Health Nursing would be adept at critically evaluating systems and policies to improve population health as a whole and assure effective public health nursing practice. This includes an emphasis on leadership, collaboration, and communication as well as expert knowledge in engaging with partners across the health care continuum to apply evidence to practice that address and improve the health of all Wisconsin populations.

Lastly, be it resolved that copies of this resolution are shared with the Secretary of the Department of Health Services, the Governor, the Legislature, and representatives of:

- Wisconsin Association of Local Health Departments and Boards
- Wisconsin Public Health Association
- Wisconsin's Federally-Recognized American Indian Tribes and Bands Leaders
- Wisconsin Nurses Association
- Wisconsin Center for Nursing
- Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
- Wisconsin Hospital Association
- Wisconsin Primary Health Care Association
- Rural Wisconsin Health Cooperative
- Wisconsin Department of Children & Families
- Schools of Nursing
- Medical Directors/Medical Leadership Team
- Association of Public Health Nurses
- Association of Community Health Nurse Educators
- American Public Health Association
- Council of Public Health Nurse Organizations
- National Association of City County Health Officials
- Association of Prevention, Teaching, and Research

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