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California Department of Public Health
Office of Regulations

July 11, 2025

RE: DPH-21-009 New Local Health Department Application

To Whom It May Concern:

The California Conference of Local Health Officers (CCLHO), which represents the appointed physician health officers of California's 61 city and county jurisdictions, would like to thank the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) for the opportunity to provide comments on the New Local Health Department (LHD) Application proposed regulation (DPH-21-009). As stated in Section 100295 of the California Health and Safety code, CDPH must consult with and seek approval by CCLHO when, by regulation, it establishes standards of education and experience for professional and technical personnel employed in local health departments and for the organization and operation of the local health departments.

After review of the proposed regulations, receipt of written comment, and a lengthy discussion with members at a meeting of the CCLHO Board of Directors on July 3, 2025, CCLHO has identified 5 areas of significant concern:

- A. Health Officer Qualifications (Section 1300)
- B. Health Officer Time Basis (Section 1256)
- C. Requirements for Temporary Funding
- D. Fragmentation of Public Health Service Delivery
- E. Communication and Coordination Between County and City

Recommendation A1: CCLHO recommends that individuals in possession of a license from the Osteopathic Medical Board of California be included as eligible for appointment as a local health officer, in addition to those licensed by the Medical Board of California.

Recommendation A2: CCLHO recommends removing the additional requirement of an MPH or 3 years full-time Public Health experience for appointment as a city, county, or city and county health officer.

Recommendation B1: CCLHO recommends that the language in CCR Title 17 Section 1256 allowing for CDPH to approve part-time health officers in small counties be maintained.

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Recommendation B2: CCLHO recommends that CDPH consider increasing the population threshold for part-time health officers, and to provide county-by-county approval for a part-time health officer contingent on a specific time basis through a process involving CCLHO.

Recommendation C1: CCLHO recommends eliminating the proposed temporary funding for new, unproven LHDs. CDPH should require a city applicant to submit an initial application to provide public health services that is inclusive of the elements outlined in Section 1559 and demonstrates that the applicant possesses sufficient non-state funds to support the first 24 months of city health department operation. After successfully providing services for 2 years, the city could apply for regular funding.

Recommendation D1: CCLHO recommends that CDPH provide an opportunity for a county to assess the financial and public health service delivery impacts on the remainder of the county were a city to form its own health department. If a county determines that the creation of a city health department (i) is not financially viable for the county health department, (ii) would reduce the level and/or quality of public health services for the remainder of the county, or (iii) is not in the county's best interests, then the city applicant shall be required to enter into an agreement with the county to provide all public health services for the remainder of the county's residents.

Recommendation E1: In its initial application, a city should provide a detailed plan for communication and coordination with the county, especially regarding service transitions. The city applicant should be encouraged to develop the plan with the county. However, at minimum, the county should be provided with an opportunity to review and comment on the plan prior to the city receiving CDPH's approval of its application.

Again, thank you for this opportunity to comment on this important regulations package. CCLHO looks forward to working with CDPH in the coming months to refine the proposed regulations so that CCLHO is able to provide our approval.

Sincerely,



Aimee Sisson, MD, MPH
President