



## HOLMES COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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Chairman Wiggam, Vice Chair John, Ranking Member Kelly and members of the State and Local Government Committee,

As President of the Holmes County Commissioners, I would like to speak in opposition of House Bill 463. House Bill 463 would create an even more clouded view of governance for public health in Ohio. We are of the opinion that the current rules for selecting and appointing Board of Health Members is working for Holmes County.

The current process allows County Commissioners to be part of District Advisory Councils and offer nominations for board members. We are also able to vote for members, review the Health Districts Annual Reports as well as offer support for its budget commission hearing.

We are proud of our local Health Department and the way they find ways to work with the local community. An issue from another health district, Ohio Department of Health, or disagreement with a state executive order is no reason to change what is working for most communities.

The intended purpose of the bill is to gain accountability and transparency, I would argue that the Holmes County General Health District does provide a high level of accountability.

### Process for Selection of Board Members

Holmes County Commissioners recognize that the way a Local Public Health Department is funded allows for a voice in the process of selection of a board of health member. Each Village, Township and yes the Commissioners in our health district attend this annual meeting and allow our voices to be heard in the process of selecting our board of health. The Health Commissioner helps us organize the meeting and many of our board of health members, agency staff and some public attend. By taking this responsibility away from the DAC body, it is going to make a Local Health Districts funding more complicated. Currently all voting members of the DAC contribute some millage or housing expenses to our Health District. Putting this solely on County Commissioners will make funding streams more narrow, and with Ohio currently woefully behind in state funding, with a ranking 47<sup>th</sup> (1) This creates a compounding problem locally where Holmes County is only funded at 30 dollars per capita when many in the country fund LHD at an average of 116 dollars per capita according to America's Health Rankings (1) .

Requiring very narrow representation of schools, hospitals, and other elected officials defeats the purpose of a diverse board.

### Accountability

Currently The health departments are required to meet National Public Health Accreditation (PHAB) which requires almost a 5 year process to achieve and many documents to show that a LHD is

performing at high standards. They also have to comply with fiscal audits, reporting requirements, program surveys, along with reporting those results to numerous officials and data systems.

As an Example, our LHD at the end of 2021 had a state biannual fiscal audit, federal single audit, 5 grant desk audits, 3 program surveys, ODH Annual Financial Review, DAC Annual Report and numerous monthly and quarterly reports that needed to be submitted to ODH. If any issues arise after those reviews action plans were created and as part of the PHAB documented and improved.

Considering how some other entities have been awarded ARPA and Covid Relief dollars I think our Health District definitely had high accountability for the work they had to perform in a most difficult time.

Our Local Health Department, even with poor funding, increased unfunded mandates, and managing the Covid Response at the local level performed very well with an overall health ranking in Ohio of 11<sup>th</sup> even though Health Factors ranked only 53rd (2).

### Transparency

Local Public Health has many layers of transparency. They have many fiscal audits that are shared with many officials and published on the state auditor's website. Additionally, the LHD completed the state Hinkle Report.

DAC meeting minutes are uploaded as part of the AFR to ODH along with the annual report and other financial reports. The Local Health Department makes these reports available through local records request and some publications of items to its website.

In conclusion, drastic changes to the current processes for LHD could have fiscal consequences that would be the burden of County Commissioners, take away processes that are already working, and increasing accountability that already exist on LHD.

Thank you, again, Chairman Wiggam, for the opportunity to discuss this very important issue with your committee. I will be happy to take any questions from the committee.

Sincerely,

Joe Miller

Holmes County Commissioner

### References

1. **United Health Foundation.** America's Health Rankings. *America's Health Rankings: National Public Health Funding*. [Online] May 3, 2022.

[https://www.americashealthrankings.org/explore/annual/measure/PH\\_funding/state/ALL](https://www.americashealthrankings.org/explore/annual/measure/PH_funding/state/ALL).

2. **Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.** County Health Rankings. *County Health Rankings Holmes County Ohio*. [Online] May 3, 2022.

<https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/ohio/2022/rankings/holmes/county/outcomes/overall/snapshot>.