

LEGISLATIVE BILL 185

Approved by the Governor February 28, 1997

Introduced by Wesely, 26

AN ACT relating to city-county health departments; to amend sections 71-1628, 71-1628.01, 71-1630, 71-1631, 71-1632, 71-1634, and 71-1635, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska; to provide new procedures for establishing city-county health departments; to harmonize provisions; and to repeal the original sections.

Be it enacted by the people of the State of Nebraska,

Section 1. Section 71-1628, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is amended to read:

71-1628. The county board of any county may (1) make an agreement with the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Health and Human Services Regulation and Licensure, or the Department of Health and Human Services Finance and Support relative to the expenditure of local, state, federal, and other funds or any combination thereof, available for public health in such county; (2) after notice and public hearing, establish and maintain a single full-time local health department for such county and any other counties which combine for that purpose and, pursuant to such combination or agreement, such counties may cooperate with one another and the Department of Health and Human Services Regulation and Licensure and may contribute to a joint fund in carrying out the purpose and intent of sections 71-1626 to 71-1636. The duration and nature of such agreement shall be evidenced by the resolutions of the county boards of such counties, and such agreement shall be submitted to and approved by the Department of Health and Human Services Regulation and Licensure; or (3) cooperate with any city which has an established department of health in the establishment and maintenance of a city-county health department as provided in section 71-1630. The duration and nature of such an agreement shall be evidenced by resolutions of the city council of the city and the county board participating, and such agreement shall be submitted to and approved by the Department of Health and Human Services Regulation and Licensure. A city-county health department shall be administered as provided in the agreement between the county and the city and shall be considered a state-approved, local, full-time public health service.

Sec. 2. Section 71-1628.01, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is amended to read:

71-1628.01. A county or district health department established under sections 71-1626 to 71-1636 may be terminated, following a public hearing, by a majority vote of the county board members for any county having a health department or of the majority of county boards having a district health department. A city-county health department may be terminated as provided by the agreement between the county and the city.

Sec. 3. Section 71-1630, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is amended to read:

71-1630. (1) When a health department has been established by the county board of a county and approved by the Department of Health and Human Services Regulation and Licensure as a county health department, the county board of such county shall appoint a board of health, which shall consist of the following members: (a) One member of the county board; (b) one dentist; (c) one physician; and (d) six public-spirited men or women interested in the health of the community. The physician and dentist shall each serve an initial term of three years. Three public-spirited men or women shall each serve an initial term of three years, and three public-spirited men or women shall each serve an initial term of two years. After the initial terms of office expire, each new appointment shall be for a term of three years. Appointments to fill any vacancies shall be for the unexpired term of the member whose term is being filled by such appointment. A county association or society of dentists or physicians or its managing board may submit each year to the county board a list of three persons of recognized ability in such profession. If such a list is submitted, the county board, in making an appointment for such profession, shall consider the names on the list and may appoint one of the persons so named.

(2) When a district health department has been established by a joint resolution of the county boards of each county in a district health department, the county boards of such district shall meet and establish a district board of health with due consideration for a fair and equitable

representation from the entire area to be served. The district board of health shall consist of the following members: (a) One member of each county board in the district, (b) at least one physician, (c) at least one dentist, and (d) one or more public-spirited men or women interested in the health of the community from each county in the district. One-third of the members shall be appointed for terms of one year, one-third for terms of two years, and one-third for terms of three years. After their terms of office expire, each new appointment shall be for a term of three years. Appointments to fill any vacancies shall be for the unexpired terms. A county association or society of dentists or physicians or its managing board may submit each year to the county boards a list of three persons of recognized ability in such profession. If such a list is submitted, the county boards, in making an appointment for such profession, shall consider the names on the list and may appoint one of the persons so named.

(3) When Except as provided in subsection (4) of this section, when the county board of any county and the city council of any city located in such county have drawn up executed an agreement, approved by the Department of Health and Human Services Regulation and Licensure, for maintaining a city-county health department, the city and county shall establish a city-county board of health. It shall consist of the following members selected by a majority vote of the city council and the county board, with due consideration to be given in an endeavor to secure a fair and equitable representation from the entire area to be served: (a) One representative of the county board, (b) one representative from the city council, (c) one physician, (d) one dentist, and (e) five public-spirited men or women, not employed in the health industry or in the health professions, who are interested in the health of the community. One-third of its members shall be appointed for terms of one year, one-third for terms of two years, and one-third for terms of three years. After their terms of office expire, each new appointment shall be for a period of three years. A county association or society of dentists or physicians or its managing board may submit each year to the city council and the county board a list of three persons of recognized ability in such profession. If such a list is submitted, the city council and the county board, in making an appointment for such profession, shall consider the names on the list and may appoint one of the persons so named.

(4)(a) When the county board of any county having a population of more than two hundred thousand inhabitants and the city council of any city located in such county have executed an agreement, approved by the Department of Health and Human Services Regulation and Licensure, for maintaining a city-county health department on or after January 1, 1997, the city and county shall establish a city-county board of health. The board shall consist of the following members to be appointed by the mayor with the consent of the city council and county board: One representative of the county board, one representative from the city council, one physician, one dentist, and five public-spirited persons who are interested in the health of the community. Three of the members shall be appointed for terms of one year, three for terms of two years, and three for terms of three years. After the initial terms of office expire, each successor member shall be appointed for a term of three years. The physician and dentist members shall be appointed as provided in this subdivision. The mayor shall invite the local county association or society of dentists or physicians or its managing board to timely submit to the mayor a list of three persons of recognized ability in the profession. A list is timely submitted if it is submitted within sixty days after the mayor's invitation. If the list is not timely submitted, the mayor may consider the list timely submitted at any time prior to making an appointment, otherwise the mayor shall appoint a person of recognized ability in the profession. If the list is timely submitted, the mayor shall consider the names on the list and shall either appoint one of the persons on the list or invite a list of three new names using the process provided in this subdivision.

(b) The board of health shall, immediately after appointment, meet and organize by the election of one of its own members as president and one as vice president. The board members may elect such other officers as they deem necessary and may adopt and promulgate rules for the guidance of the board which are not inconsistent with law or the agreement creating the board. If any board member resigns or ceases to meet the requirements for eligibility on the board, or if there is any other vacancy on the board, the mayor shall appoint another representative to serve for the member's unexpired term subject to consent by a majority vote of both the city council and the county board. Any appointment to fill a vacancy on the board shall be for the unexpired term of the member whose vacancy is being filled.

(c) The board of health shall have the following duties:

(i) Assessment of community health status and available resources for health matters, including collecting and analyzing relevant data and annually reporting and making recommendations on improving public health matters to the mayor, city council, and county board;

(ii) Policy development for proposals before the board of health, the city council, and the county board to support and improve public health, including appointing, with the approval of the mayor, city council, and county board, advisory committees to the board of health to facilitate community development functions and coalition building related to public health and adopting and approving official health department policies consistent with applicable law and approved by the affirmative vote of not less than five board members at a regular meeting of the board in the following areas:

(A) Community health services and health promotion and outreach, specifically including policies related to the following:

(I) Client services and fees;

(II) Standing orders, supervision, screening, and emergency and referral protocols and procedures;

(III) Monitoring and reporting; and

(IV) Communicable disease investigation, immunization, vaccination, testing, and prevention measures, including measures to arrest the progress of communicable diseases;

(B) Environmental health, specifically including policies related to the following:

(I) Permitting, inspection, and enforcement;

(II) Monitoring, sampling, and reporting;

(III) Technical assistance and plan review; and

(IV) Prevention measures;

(C) Investigating and controlling diseases and injury, specifically including policies related to the following:

(I) Permitting, inspection, and enforcement;

(II) Monitoring, sampling, and reporting;

(III) Technical assistance and plan review; and

(IV) Prevention measures; and

(D) Other health matters as may be requested by the city council or county board; and

(iii) Assurance that needed services are available through public or private sources in the community, including:

(A) Acting in an advisory capacity to review and recommend changes to ordinances, resolutions, and resource allocations before the city council or county board related to health matters;

(B) Annually reviewing and recommending changes in the proposed budget for resource allocations related to the health department as provided in the city-county agreement; and

(C) Monitoring and reviewing the enforcement of laws and regulations of the board of health, city council, and county board related to public health in the community.

(d) The mayor of the city shall appoint, with the approval of the board of health, city council, and county board, the health director of the health department. The health director shall be a member of the unclassified service of the city under the direction and supervision of the mayor. The health director shall be well-trained in public health work, but he or she need not be a graduate of an accredited medical school. If the health director is not a graduate of an accredited medical school, the health director shall be assisted at least part time by at least one medical consultant who is a licensed physician. The mayor shall submit the health department budget to the city council and county board. The mayor shall also provide budget information to the board of health with sufficient time to allow such board to consider such information. The mayor may enter into contracts and accept grants on behalf of the health department. The mayor may terminate the health director with approval of a majority vote of the city council, the county board, and the board of health. The health director shall:

(i) Provide administrative supervision of the health department;

(ii) Make all necessary sanitary and health investigations and inspections;

(iii) Investigate the existence of any contagious or infectious disease and adopt measures to arrest the progress of the disease;

(iv) Distribute free, as the local needs may require, all vaccines, drugs, serums, and other preparations obtained from the Department of Health and Human Services or otherwise provided for public health purposes;

(v) Give professional advice and information to school authorities and other public agencies on all matters pertaining to sanitation and public

health:

(vi) Inform the board of health when the city council or county board is considering proposals related to health matters or has otherwise requested recommendations from the board of health;

(vii) Inform the board of health of developments in the field of public health and of any need for updating or adding to or deleting from the programs of the health department; and

(viii) Perform duties and functions as otherwise provided by law.

Sec. 4. Section 71-1631, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is amended to read:

71-1631. The Except as provided in subsection (4) of section 71-1630, the board of health of each county, district, or city-county health department organized under sections 71-1626 to 71-1636 shall, immediately after appointment, meet and organize by the election of one of its own members as president, one as vice president, and another as secretary and, either from its own members or otherwise, a treasurer and shall have the power set forth in this section. The board may elect such other officers as it may deem necessary and may adopt and promulgate such rules and regulations for its own guidance and for the government of such health department as may be necessary, not inconsistent with sections 71-1626 to 71-1636. The board of health shall, with the approval of the county board and the municipality, whenever a city is a party in such a city-county health department:

(1) Select the health director of such department who shall be (a) well-trained in public health work though he or she need not be a graduate of an accredited medical school, but if he or she is not such a graduate, he or she shall be assisted at least part time by at least one medical consultant who shall be a licensed physician, (b) qualified in accordance with the merit system regulations of the state personnel system, and (c) approved by the Department of Health and Human Services Regulation and Licensure;

(2) Hold an annual meeting each year, at which meeting officers shall be elected for the ensuing year;

(3) Hold meetings quarterly each year;

(4) Hold special meetings upon a written request signed by two of its members and filed with the secretary;

(5) Provide suitable offices, facilities, and equipment for the health director and assistants and their pay and traveling expenses in the performance of their duties, with mileage to be computed at the rate provided in section 81-1176;

(6) Publish, on or soon after the second Tuesday in July of each year, in pamphlet form for free distribution, an annual report showing (a) the condition of its trust for each year, (b) the sums of money received from all sources, giving the name of any donor, (c) how all money has been expended and for what purpose, and (d) such other statistics and information with regard to the work of such health department as may be of general interest;

(7) Enact rules and regulations, subsequent to public hearing held after due public notice of such hearing by publication at least once in a newspaper having general circulation in the county or district at least ten days prior to such hearing, and enforce the same for the protection of public health and the prevention of communicable diseases within its jurisdiction, subject to the review and approval of such rules and regulations by the Department of Health and Human Services Regulation and Licensure;

(8) Make all necessary sanitary and health investigations and inspections;

(9) In counties having a population of more than three hundred thousand inhabitants, enact rules and regulations for the protection of public health and the prevention of communicable diseases within the district, except that such rules and regulations shall have no application within the jurisdictional limits of any city of the metropolitan class and shall not be in effect until (a) thirty days after the completion of a three-week publication in a legal newspaper, (b) approved by the county attorney with his or her written approval attached thereto, and (c) filed in the office of the county clerk of such county;

(10) Investigate the existence of any contagious or infectious disease and adopt measures, with the approval of the Department of Health and Human Services Regulation and Licensure, to arrest the progress of the same;

(11) Distribute free as the local needs may require all vaccines, drugs, serums, and other preparations obtained from the Department of Health and Human Services or purchased for public health purposes by the county board;

(12) Upon request, give professional advice and information to all city, village, and school authorities on all matters pertaining to sanitation and public health;

(13) Fix the salaries of all employees, including the health director. Such city-county health department may also establish an independent pension plan, retirement plan, or health insurance plan or, by agreement with any participating city or county, provide for the coverage of officers and employees of such city-county health department under such city or county pension plan, retirement plan, or health insurance plan. Officers and employees of a county health department shall be eligible to participate in the county pension plan, retirement plan, or health insurance plan of such county;

(14) Establish fees for the costs of all services, including those services for which third-party payment is available; and

(15) In addition to powers conferred elsewhere in the laws of the state and notwithstanding any other law of the state, implement and enforce an air pollution control program under subdivision (23) of section 81-1504 or subsection (1) of section 81-1528, which program shall be consistent with the federal Clean Air Act, as amended, 42 U.S.C. 7401 et seq. Such powers shall include without limitation those involving injunctive relief, civil penalties, criminal fines, and burden of proof. Nothing in this section shall preclude the control of air pollution by resolution, ordinance, or regulation not in actual conflict with the state air pollution control regulations.

Sec. 5. Section 71-1632, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is amended to read:

71-1632. The Except as provided in subsection (4) of section 71-1630, the health director of such a county, district, or city-county health department shall have the power and duty to (1) be the executive officer of the local boards of health; (2) appoint, subject to any applicable county or city civil service laws, rules, or regulations, a properly functioning staff and other personnel as may be necessary, whose qualifications shall conform to the United States Public Health Standards and whose remuneration shall conform to an established compensation schedule set by such local board of health and which is reviewed and approved annually by such board; (3) review annually, with the local board of health, the proposed budget of the department; (4) organize, with the approval of the local board of health, a citizens' advisory health council that will aid in developing a public health program to meet the particular needs, hazards, and problems of the health district; and (5) organize, with the approval of the local board of health, a medical and dental advisory committee.

Sec. 6. Section 71-1634, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is amended to read:

71-1634. (1) No funds shall be disbursed except upon vouchers approved by the director of health and the president of the board of health of such county, district, or for a city-county a county or district health department, as may be provided by agreement between the county and the municipality. In the absence of the health director, the president and the vice president or, in his or her absence, the secretary are authorized to approve such vouchers before any funds are disbursed. In the absence of the president, the health director and the vice president or, in his or her absence, the secretary are authorized to approve such vouchers before any funds are disbursed. In the absence of both president and health director, the vice president and the secretary are authorized to approve such vouchers before any funds are disbursed.

(2) Funds of a city-county health department shall be disbursed as provided by the agreement between the county and the city.

Sec. 7. Section 71-1635, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is amended to read:

71-1635. When the county board of any county or counties creates a health department as provided by sections 71-1626 to 71-1636, every other local, municipal, or county public health agency or department, except city or county hospitals, may be abolished, and such county or district health department may be given full control over all health matters in the county or counties, including all municipalities ~~therein~~ in the county in conformity with the rules, regulations, and policies of the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Health and Human Services Regulation and Licensure, and the Department of Health and Human Services Finance and Support. When a municipality city has joined in the establishment of a city-county health department, such city-county health department may be given such control over all health matters in the municipality city as may be provided by agreement between the county and the municipality city with the approval of the Department of Health and Human Services Regulation and Licensure. If the health department in a county or city is changed, any lawful ordinance, resolution, regulation, policy, or procedure relating to any of the functions conferred by sections 71-1626 to 71-1636 of the former health

department shall remain in full force and effect until it is repealed or replaced or until it conflicts with a subsequently enacted measure.

Sec. 8. Original sections 71-1628, 71-1628.01, 71-1630, 71-1631, 71-1632, 71-1634, and 71-1635, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, are repealed.