

**New Jersey Department of Health
Office of Local Public Health
P. O. Box 360
Trenton, NJ 08625-0360**

**UNIFORM SHARED PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES AGREEMENT
GUIDELINES**

Pursuant to the provisions of the *Local Health Services Act, N.J.S.A. 26:3A2-10*, each municipality is required to provide a program of public health services which meets standards set forth in *Public Health Practice Standards of Performance for Local Boards of Health in New Jersey, N.J.A.C. 8:52*. In cases where a municipality chooses not to establish and maintain its own local health department, it may satisfy the Standards' requirements by entering into a Uniform Shared Services Agreement with a provider local health agency. The purpose of this shared services agreement is to assure that appropriate, required and needs-based health services are provided within the contracting municipality. Such an agreement brings direct and full responsibility for administration, oversight and direction of all health services and activities to the provider, its Health Officer and designated staff. In some cases the provider is also responsible for the direct provision of public health services for the recipient as delineated in the Agreement. In this regard, a municipality cannot name the Health Officer of another local health agency as its Health Officer without relinquishing the daily administrative responsibilities for all public health services to the provider health agency. The Agreement is a Public Health Services Agreement, not simply an agreement for a Health Officer. This should be clearly described in the preamble to the terms of the Agreement.

The terms of the Agreement must clearly address the following, as a minimum:

- Designation of the provider local health department's Health Officer as the full-time Health Officer and chief executive officer for all health services within the contracting municipality.
- Provider health department shall provide to the contracting municipality a public health Program that meets the standards set forth in *Public Health Practice Standards of Performance for Local Boards of Health in New Jersey, N.J.A.C. 8:52*, or its successor regulatory standards.
- In cases where the provider health department does not directly conduct all services/activities, the provider and contracting municipality's responsibilities for specific services/activities are to be itemized and delineated in the shared services agreement. For example, the contracting municipality employs its own Registered Environmental Health Specialist (REHS) who performs sanitary inspections, etc.; his or her activities will be overseen and directed by the provider Health Officer while the service which is provided would be listed as being conducted by the contracting municipality. On the other hand, the provider may provide a Communicable Disease Control Program to the contracting municipality, including all necessary staff and activities, this would be listed as being conducted by the provider.

By virtue of the Agreement, the provider health department is responsible for assuring that health services meet the terms of *Practice Standards*. Staff employed by the contracting municipality may remain employed by that municipality, but must report to the provider department's Health Officer or designated representative. The provider local health department and its Health Officer are accountable for all health services and activities and for all health issues that arise or need to be addressed, within the recipient municipality.

- The Health Officer or his or her designee shall participate in regular meetings with the contracting municipality's public health staff, governing body, Board of Health and other representatives to assure open communications and the planning/implementation of health services that meet the municipality's health needs.
- The Agreement shall be for a minimum of two years pursuant to the provisions set forth at N.J.S.A. 3A2-12. However, either party may terminate the Agreement for just cause provided that the termination is in writing. Short term Agreements may be established for interim Health Officer and program direction during the time that a governing body or Board of Health is seeking to fill the full-time Health Officer position. In these situations the criteria listed above are still required to be part of such Agreements.

Provider health departments are encouraged to have the New Jersey Department of Health review a copy of the proposed Agreement, in final draft form and prior to execution, to assure that it meets the above criteria.

A copy of the executed Uniform Shared Public Health Services Agreement is to be submitted to the Department upon execution.

Office of Local Public Health
February, 2012