



ALLEGHENY COUNTY

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Contact: Amie M. Downs
412-350-3711
412-327-3700 (cell)
amie.downs@alleghenycounty.us

Fitzgerald Statement on Bogen Appointment as PA Secretary of Health

PITTSBURGH – County Executive Rich Fitzgerald issued the following statement after the news that Allegheny County Health Department Director Dr. Debra Bogen has been named by Governor-elect Josh Shapiro as the Pennsylvania Secretary of Health:

“We are so proud of Dr. Bogen and thrilled to see this next step in her extraordinary career. We have been fortunate to have her serve the residents of Allegheny County for the last nearly three years and look forward to all that she will do on behalf of the entire Commonwealth’s residents.

“When we announced her hiring in early 2020, none of us could have expected that COVID would be upon us so quickly. In March of that year, Dr. Bogen answered the call and began her term as the new Health Department director several months before she was scheduled to do so. Since that time, she has led the department and this county through our response to COVID-19 and all of its iterations. As the lead agency providing response, the Health Department provided advice, briefings and directives to help guide not just the county, but also its residents and local businesses throughout the pandemic.”

“As the pandemic continued, so did the work of the department as it worked to understand the disease, how to control its spread, source and deploy the necessary supplies such as personal protective equipment, collaborate with our local Federally Qualified Health Centers to provide COVID-19 testing in underserved communities, set up a large COVID-19 testing site in McKeesport, and devise plans for the rollout of vaccine when it would become available. Dr. Bogen also coordinated with various other departments to protect the safety of our residents, ensure ongoing service delivery, and assisting the most vulnerable in our community.

“And while she led that massive response, she continued growing and building the Health Department to ensure ongoing public health education, compilation of vital health statistics, surveilling and controlling communicable diseases, enforcing environmental regulations, and many other programs that protect and improve the health of the county’s residents.

“In just the past few years, the Health Department has a number of significant accomplishments particularly as it relates to air quality. In the last 12 years, fine particulate pollution has decreased **32%** at the Liberty monitor and hazardous air pollutants have decreased **80%**. These are some of the largest decreases in fine particulate pollution anywhere in the country. It’s quite an accomplishment.

“With Dr. Bogen’s leadership, the department has held sources’ responsible and accountable for their emissions and continue to push boundaries on what actions the department can take under the federal Clean Air Act. That work has resulted in the filing of documentation with the EPA showing that the county’s average concentration over the past three years has been below the national standard set by the agency. As a result, the county is expected to be redesignated as in attainment with PM_{2.5} later this year.

“There have been dozens and dozens of other improvements and accomplishments, too numerous to name, but a few examples include:

- The department is the recipient of CDC grant funding that has allowed for additional opioid surveillance, provision of naloxone kits, and thousands of overdose prevention trainings and events throughout the county;
- In 2020, food safety inspection reports began to be completed electronically to make the process more efficient both for food facilities as well as staff;
- The department, along with Healthy Start, has received three years of training and technical assistance from CityMatCH to develop programs and policies and to implement equity-focused strategies to reduce birth disparities in the county;
- The department is piloting at-home STD testing for residents to determine the value of more accessible service offerings;
- The department continues to partner with or lead a number of groups focused on specific health items, including the Allegheny County Breastfeeding Coalition and the Allegheny County Lead Task Force;
- The department also continues to manage COVID response, West Nile Virus, monkeypox and other surveillance efforts.”

Dr. Bogen was nominated this morning along with Dr. Val Arkoosh in Human Services, Jason Kavulich in Aging, Dr. Latika Davis-Jones in Drug & Alcohol Programs, and Mike Humphreys in Insurance.

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Office of County Executive Rich Fitzgerald
101 Courthouse | 436 Grant Street | Pittsburgh, PA 15219
Phone: 412-350-6500 | Fax: 412-350-6512
www.alleghenycounty.us

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