

NEWS RELEASE



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Headline: Director of Oregon Public Health announced today

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Mel Kohn, M.D., M.P.H., has been appointed as the head of the Oregon Public Health Division. Kohn has been serving as the acting public health director and state health officer since September 2008. His appointment comes after a national search for a director.

"Dr. Kohn, with his dedication and years of experience, is uniquely qualified to serve Oregonians in their public health needs. He was instrumental in guiding the state through the H1N1 pandemic," said Bruce Goldberg, M.D., director of the Oregon Department of Human Services. "I know he will be an outstanding leader and will help assure a focus on health and prevention in our work creating the new Oregon Health Authority."

Oregon Public Health will become part of the Oregon Health Authority, with the goal to promote the health of Oregonians.

"I'm excited to have the opportunity to work with the many highly capable leaders throughout Oregon's public health system, both among my own staff and at county health departments in every community," Kohn said.

The Public Health Division operates more than 100 prevention-related programs. Programs include maternal and child health and nutrition, disease and injury prevention, drinking water and environmental health monitoring, hospital licensing, emergency medical services regulation, public health laboratory services, school-based health centers, immunizations, radiation exposure monitoring, food safety, tobacco education and prevention, acute and communicable disease prevention, and vital records.

(more)

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Kohn previously served as state epidemiologist and administrator of the DHS Office of Disease Prevention and Epidemiology. He has worked in the public health sector since 1993, including two years as an Epidemic Intelligence Service officer for the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Before joining the department Kohn was medical director for the Injury Prevention Section of the Louisiana Office of Public Health in New Orleans, and also served as an assistant professor of pediatrics at Tulane University School of Medicine. Kohn received a bachelor of arts degree in Russian and East European studies from Yale in 1981, received his medical degree from Harvard in 1990, and received his master's in public health from Tulane School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine in 1997. He is board-certified in pediatrics and preventive medicine.

Kohn is also the president of the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists; a member of the Association of State and Territorial Health Officers Education Committee and the chairman of the Northwest Health Foundation Board.

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