

WEST VIRGINIA CODE: §16-1-6

§16-1-6. Powers and duties of the commissioner.

The commissioner is the chief executive, administrative and fiscal officer of the Bureau for Public Health and has the following powers and duties:

(a) To supervise and direct the fiscal and administrative matters of the bureau, and in that regard and in accordance with law, employ, fix the compensation of and discharge all persons necessary for the proper execution of the public health laws of this state and the efficient and proper discharge of the duties imposed upon, and execution of powers vested in the commissioner by law and as directed by the secretary;

(b) To enforce all laws of this state concerning public health; to that end, the commissioner shall make, or cause to be made, investigations and inquiries respecting the cause of disease, especially of epidemics and endemic conditions, and the means of prevention, suppression or control of those conditions; the source of sickness and mortality, and the effects of environment, employment, habits and circumstances of life on the public health.

The commissioner shall further make, or cause to be made, inspections and examinations of food, drink and drugs offered for sale or public consumption in the manner the commissioner considers necessary to protect the public health and shall report all violations of laws and rules relating to the law to the prosecuting attorney of the county in which the violations occur;

(c) To make complaint or cause proceedings to be instituted against any person, corporation or other entity for the violation of any public health law before any court or agency, without being required to give security for costs; the action may be taken without the sanction of the prosecuting attorney of the county in which the proceedings are instituted or to which the proceedings relate;

(d) To promote the provision of essential public health services to citizens of this state;

(e) To monitor the administration, operation and coordination of the local boards of health and local health officers;

(f) To develop and maintain a state plan of operation that sets forth the needs of the state in the areas of public health; goals and objectives for meeting those needs; methods for achieving the stated goals and objectives; and needed personnel, funds and authority for achieving the goals and objectives;

(g) To collect data as may be required to foster knowledge on the citizenry's health status, the health system and costs of health care;

(h) To delegate to any appointee, assistant or employee any and all powers and duties vested

in the commissioner, including, but not limited to, the power to execute contracts and agreements in the name of the bureau: Provided, That the commissioner is responsible for the acts of his or her appointees, assistants and employees;

(i) To transfer at the direction of the secretary, notwithstanding other provisions of this code, any patient or resident between hospitals and facilities under the control of the commissioner and, by agreement with the state Commissioner of Corrections and otherwise in accord with law, accept a transfer of a resident of a facility under the jurisdiction of the state Commissioner of Corrections;

(j) To make periodic reports to the Governor and to the Legislature relative to specific subject areas of public health, the state facilities under the supervision of the commissioner, or other matters affecting the public health of the people of the state, at the direction of the secretary;

(k) At the direction of the secretary, to accept and use for the benefit of the health of the people of this state, any gift or devise of any property or thing which is lawfully given: Provided, That if any gift is for a specific purpose or for a particular state hospital or facility it shall be used as specified. Any profit which may arise from any gift or devise of any property or thing shall be deposited in a special revenue fund with the state Treasurer and shall be used only as specified by the donor or donors;

(l) To acquire by condemnation or otherwise any interest, right, privilege, land or improvement and hold title to the land or improvement, for the use or benefit of the state or a state hospital or facility, and, by and with the consent of the Governor, and at the direction of the secretary, to sell, exchange or otherwise convey any interest, right, privilege, land or improvement acquired or held by the state, state hospital or state facility and deposit the proceeds from the sale, exchange or other conveyance into the hospital services revenue account. Any condemnation proceedings shall be conducted pursuant to chapter fifty-four of this code;

(m) To inspect and enforce rules to control the sanitary conditions of and license all institutions and health care facilities as set forth in this chapter, including, but not limited to, schools, whether public or private, public conveyances, dairies, slaughterhouses, workshops, factories, labor camps, places of entertainment, hotels, motels, tourist camps, all other places open to the general public and inviting public patronage or public assembly, or tendering to the public any item for human consumption and places where trades or industries are conducted;

(n) To make inspections, conduct hearings, and to enforce the legislative rules concerning occupational and industrial health hazards, the sanitary condition of streams, sources of water supply, sewerage facilities, and plumbing systems, and the qualifications of personnel connected with the supplies, facilities or systems without regard to whether they are publicly or privately owned; and to make inspections, conduct hearings and enforce the legislative rules concerning the design of chlorination and filtration facilities and swimming

pools;

(o) To provide in accordance with this subdivision and the definitions and other provisions of article one-a, chapter twenty-seven of this code, and as directed by the secretary, for a comprehensive program for the care, treatment and rehabilitation of alcoholics and drug abusers; for research into the cause and prevention of alcoholism and drug abuse; for the training and employment of personnel to provide the requisite rehabilitation of alcoholics and drug abusers; and for the education of the public concerning alcoholism and drug abuse;

(p) To provide in accordance with this subdivision for a program for the care, treatment and rehabilitation of the parents of sudden infant death syndrome victims; for the training and employment of personnel to provide the requisite rehabilitation of parents of sudden infant death syndrome victims; for the education of the public concerning sudden infant death syndrome; for the responsibility of reporting to the Legislature on a quarterly basis the incidence of sudden infant death syndrome cases occurring in West Virginia; for the education of police, employees and volunteers of all emergency services concerning sudden infant death syndrome; for the state sudden infant death syndrome advisory council to develop regional family support groups to provide peer support to families of sudden infant death syndrome victims; and for requesting appropriation of funds in both federal and state budgets to fund the sudden infant death syndrome program;

(q) To establish and maintain a state hygienic laboratory as an aid in performing the duties imposed upon the commissioner, and to employ chemists, bacteriologists, and other employees that may be necessary to properly operate the laboratory. The commissioner may establish branches of the state laboratory at any points within the state that are necessary in the interest of the public health;

(r) To establish and fund a uniform health professionals data system to collect and maintain uniform data on all health professionals in the state. This data shall include, but not be limited to, the following information about each health professional: His or her name, profession, the area of the state where he or she is practicing, his or her educational background, his or her employer's name, and number of years practicing within the profession. The boards provided for in articles three, four, four-a, five, seven, seven-a, fourteen, fourteen-a, fifteen, sixteen, twenty, twenty-one, twenty-three, twenty-eight, thirty-one, thirty-two, thirty-four, thirty-five, thirty-six and thirty-seven, chapter thirty of this code shall annually collect the data on health professionals under their jurisdiction in the format prescribed by the commissioner. Each board shall pay to the bureau annually, an amount determined by the commissioner to be a pro rata portion, for anticipated expenses to establish and operate the uniform health professionals data system required by this section. The commissioner may standardize data collection methods if necessary to implement the provisions of this section. The commissioner shall publish annually and make available, upon request, a report setting forth the data which was collected the previous year; areas of the state which the collected data indicates have a shortage of health professionals; and projections, based upon the collected data, as to the need for more health professionals in certain areas;

(s) To expend, for the purpose of performing the public health duties imposed on the bureau, or authorized by law, any sums appropriated by the Legislature. The commissioner may make advance payments to public and nonprofit health services providers when the commissioner determines it is necessary for the initiation or continuation of public health services. The advance payments, being in derogation of the principle of payment only after receipt of goods or services, shall be authorized only after serious consideration by the commissioner of the necessity of the advance payments and shall be for a period no greater than ninety days in advance of rendition of service or receipt of goods and continuation of health services; and

(t) To exercise all other powers delegated to the commissioner by the secretary or by this chapter or otherwise in this code, to enforce all health laws, and to pursue all other activities necessary and incident to the authority and area of concern entrusted to the bureau or the commissioner.