



JOHN R. KASICH

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Rob Nichols, (330) 760-7582, Rob.Nichols@governor.ohio.gov

KASICH NAMES NEW LEADERSHIP TEAM AT HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Focus on Management, Medical Experience Aims to Elevate Role in Public Health Issues

COLUMBUS – Today Gov. John R. Kasich named a new team to lead the Ohio Department of Health, appointing an experienced manager with health care experience—Rick Hodges—as director, and an experienced public health clinician—Dr. Mary Applegate—as interim medical director. Their charge will be to elevate the agency’s operational effectiveness as well as its medical expertise in helping create conditions in which Ohioans can be healthy.

“Ohio’s public health responsibilities cover a wide range of complex issues, requiring a team of people with a rare mix of skills. With his proven management ability, Rick is well prepared to lead the Department to carry out its mission, and Dr. Applegate’s medical expertise will allow her to support Rick by focusing on medical issues and assisting him in recruiting an expert clinical team. Ohio is fortunate that they have agreed to help take our state’s public health efforts to the next level, and I’m excited about what they’re going to accomplish for Ohioans,” said Kasich.

A former state legislator, Hodges has served in a range of management roles including senior roles in health care organizations in Northwest Ohio. He currently serves as Executive Director of the Ohio Turnpike and Infrastructure Commission where he has successfully overhauled the turnpike’s operations to reduce costs and led a new bonding effort to help improve the quality of Ohio’s roads linking to the Turnpike statewide. Hodges will start Aug. 11 and have overall responsibility for managing the department, but will work closely with Dr. Applegate.

Hodges replaces Dr. Ted Wymyslo who left Health earlier this year. The chair of the Turnpike Commission will name a temporary replacement soon as it searches for a permanent executive director.

Dr. Mary Applegate currently serves as the medical director at the Department of Medicaid and is board certified in both Pediatrics and Internal Medicine. She is a fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American College of Physicians, with 20 years of experience in rural primary care practice. At Medicaid she has overseen the development of Ohio’s new quality initiative to help improve health outcomes for low-income Ohioans. Dr. Applegate will start Aug. 11 and work with Hodges to recruit a team of clinical professionals who bring the best medical knowledge to inform all aspects of Health’s work in both policy making and regulating Ohio’s health care system. Once that team is in place, Dr. Applegate will resume her role at Medicaid.

The Ohio Department of Health partners with 125 local health districts to ensure access to health services, protect health and safety through regulation of health care delivery systems, coordinate the response to public health emergencies, and prevent disease and promote better health. Health provides leadership through the Governor's Office of Health Transformation to incorporate population health priorities into all of Ohio's health care regulatory and payment systems, with a goal of increasing the number of Ohioans who are healthy at every stage of life.

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