

BOCC

RESOLUTION NO. 21-60

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
COUNTY OF EL PASO, STATE OF COLORADO

**AMENDMENT TO THE RESOLUTION TO OPPOSE THE BOARD OF HEALTH
MEMBER REQUIREMENTS DRAFT BILL**

WHEREAS, pursuant to C.R.S. §§ 30-10-101(1), 30-11-103, and 30-11-107, the Board of County Commissioners of El Paso County, Colorado ("County" or "Board"), has the legislative authority to manage the concerns of the County and to exercise such other and further powers as are conferred by law; and

WHEREAS, in furtherance of said authority, the Board previously adopted the 2021 El Paso County State Legislative Policy Guide ("Policy") by way of Resolution No. 21-42; and

WHEREAS, the Policy, in part, sets forth the process by which the Board may formally support or oppose any state legislation proposed for calendar year 2021; and

WHEREAS, the Board previously provided direction to staff that the Board oppose the 'Board of Health Member Requirements' draft bill, which has now been officially introduced in the General Assembly; and

WHEREAS, the Board now desires to ratify its direction by way of an amended formal letter of opposition, attached hereto and incorporated herein.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of County Commissioners, State of Colorado, County of El Paso, hereby officially opposes HB21-1115: Board of Health Member Requirements.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board formally adopts the attached amended letter as its official position opposing HB21-1115: Board of Health Member Requirements.

DONE THIS 23rd day of February, 2021, at Colorado Springs, Colorado.

ATTACHED



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF EL PASO COUNTY, COLORADO

By: *Stan VanderWeil*
Chair

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El Paso County, CO



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EL PASO  COUNTY
COLORADO

**Letter Opposing HB21-1115: Board of
Health Member Requirements**

February 23, 2021
719-520-7276
Centennial Hall, 200 S. Cascade
Colorado Springs, CO 80903

Board of County Commissioners

Holly Williams, District 1
Carrie Geitner, District 2
Stan VanderWerf, District 3
Longinos Gonzalez, Jr., District 4
Cami Bremer, District 5

February 23, 2021

Honorable Legislators,

The Board of El Paso County Commissioners expresses our frustration and opposition to **HB21-1115: Board of Health Member Requirements**. This bill is the wrong approach for Colorado and violates the principle of local control. This bill as written also violates standard practice throughout most of the State. Having one or more commissioners serve on a district board of health ensures a citizen connection to their public health board through their elected officials. Now is not the time to ignore the perspective of 61 of 64 counties in the state.

The removal of local control proposed in this bill is by far the most concerning aspect of this legislation. Current statute gives all counties the ability to appoint both citizen volunteers, as well as county commissioners, to boards of health. The structure of our board of health has worked very well for El Paso County and we do not need the state to provide a solution to a problem that does not exist in our County. We stand with CCI in expressing a near unanimous bipartisan opposition to the intent of this bill.

County commissioner involvement in the public health discussion is a critical component of effective governance, as it provides a direct feedback loop between public health, county leaders, and the citizens of that county. This integration creates efficiency and helps to elevate the financial and workforce needs of county public health departments. El Paso County Public Health is funded, in part, by El Paso County, so having commissioner participation becomes that much more important; especially when the county budget is being developed each year.

The bill sponsors insinuate that boards of public health in Colorado do not have the knowledge, background, or experience required to make informed public health decisions. This couldn't be further from the truth in El Paso County. Our board of health is made up of nine highly qualified individuals, two of whom hold Doctor of Medicine degrees. Our board has representation from across the spectrum, including UC Health, Memorial Hospital, and the Colorado Springs Osteopathic Foundation. Along with two county commissioners, and a member of the Colorado Springs City Council, the board includes a former command surgeon to North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) and U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM), a board certified pathologist in Anatomical, Clinical and Forensic Pathology, and a registered nurse.

The diversity of our board allows for the balancing of a broad spectrum of community, medical, and economic impacts. The variety of the impacts experienced in El Paso County makes county commissioner involvement essential to the success of not only our board of health, but of every county board that has commissioner representation. The recent COVID-19 pandemic has not only devastated the health of our citizens but has also severely impacted our local economy. County commissioner involvement is critical to bridging the divides between community, medical, economic, and citizen public health concerns. Elected official's participation on these boards are critical to facilitating solutions that are best for local communities.

As a board, we choose to support legislation that maintains and enhances local government control and ensures a diversity of perspectives on any board of health in the State. This proposed bill does neither of those things. For the reasons mentioned above, we ask that you withdraw this bill and allow commissioners to continue to serve in their roles on county boards of health.

Stan VanderWerf, Chair

Cami Bremer, Vice-Chair

Longinos Gonzalez, Member

Holly Williams, Member

Carrie Geitner, Member