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# N.C. Local Health Departments, Boards, & Directors

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NC law requires counties to provide public health services



Image source: pxhere.com

“A county shall  
provide public  
health services.”  
G.S. 130A-34

# Every county has:

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## Local health department

- A single-county or multi-county agency that provides public health services (AKA local public health agency)

## Local board of health

- A board empowered to exercise the legal powers and duties of a board of health (AKA governing board)

## Local health director

- An employee and officer of the department who meets certain education & experience criteria and who is authorized to carry out powers and duties prescribed by law

# NC law establishes four types of local health department

## County health department

- G.S. 130A-34

## District health department (multi-county)

- G.S. 130A-36

## Consolidated human services agency

- G.S. 130A-34;  
130A-43; 153A-77

## Public health authority

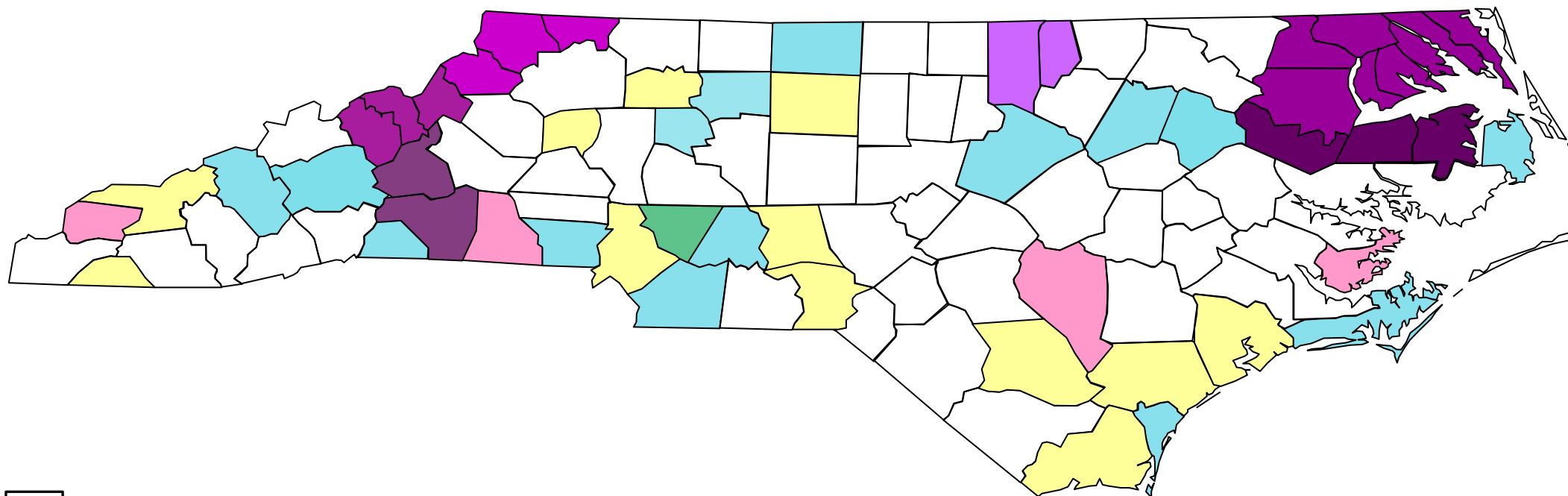
- G.S. 130A-45  
through 130A-  
45.13

# The department type determines the type of board of health (BOH)

Department type	BOH type	N.C. laws
County health department	County board of health (appointed), <b>or</b>	G.S. 130A-35
	Board of county commissioners serves as board of health and appoints an advisory committee	G.S. 153A-77(a)
District (multi-county) health department	District board of health (appointed)	G.S. 130A-37
Consolidated human services agency	Consolidated human services (CHS) board (appointed), <b>or</b>	G.S. 153A-77(c)
	Board of county commissioners serves as CHS board and appoints an advisory committee	G.S. 153A-77(a)
Public health authority	Public health authority board	G.S. 130A-45.1

# Types of Local Public Health Agencies & Boards

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-  County health department with county board of health (47)
-  County health department governed by board of county commissioners (Graham, Cleveland, Sampson, Pamlico) (4)
-  District health department with district board of health (6 districts delineated by different shades of purple) (Yancey, Mitchell, Avery; Rutherford, McDowell; Watauga, Ashe, Alleghany; Granville, Vance; Hertford, Bertie, Gates, Chowan, Perquimans, Pasquotank, Camden, Currituck; Martin, Tyrrell, Washington) (21)
-  Consolidated human services agency with consolidated human services board (Haywood, Buncombe, Polk, Gaston, Davie, Union, Forsyth, Stanly, Rockingham, Wake, Nash, Edgecombe, New Hanover, Carteret, Dare) (15)
-  Consolidated human services agency governed by board of county commissioners (Clay, Swain, Alexander, Yadkin, Mecklenburg [no advisory committee], Guilford, Montgomery, Richmond, Bladen, Brunswick, Pender, Onslow) (12)
-  Public hospital authority with hospital board authorized to act as board of health (Cabarrus) (1)



Image source: commons.wikimedia.org

# N.C. Boards of Health

County BOH  
(11 members)

- County commissioner
- Physician
- Dentist
- Optometrist
- Veterinarian
- Registered nurse
- Pharmacist
- Professional engineer
- 3 general public

CHS board  
(up to 25 members)

- County commissioner
- 2 physicians (1 must be a psychiatrist)
- Dentist
- Optometrist
- Veterinarian
- Registered nurse
- Pharmacist
- Engineer
- Psychologist
- Social worker
- 4 consumers of human services
- General public members

District BOH  
(15-18 members)

- County commissioner from each county
- Physician
- Dentist
- Optometrist
- Veterinarian
- Registered nurse
- Pharmacist
- Professional engineer

PHA Board  
(7-11 members)

- County commissioner
- Physician
- Dentist
- Any 2 of the following:
  - Optometrist
  - Veterinarian
  - Nurse
  - Pharmacist
  - Engineer
  - Accountant
- Hospital administrator
- General public members

If board of county commissioners assumes role of county BOH or CHS board, the elected commissioners serve as the board and appoint an advisory committee, which must include the same members as a county BOH.



# NC law prescribes a board of health's role and gives it its powers and duties



Image source: commons.wikimedia.org

Role: Protect and promote the public health

Powers and duties include:

- Adopt local public health rules (AKA board of health rules)
- Adjudicate disputes regarding local public health rules
- Make policy for local public health agency
- Impose local public health fees
- Satisfy state accreditation requirements for BOHs
- Appoint the local health director, unless the agency is a CHSA

# Advisory committee on health

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When a board of county commissioners (BOCC) assumes the powers and duties of a board of health, or of a consolidated human services board that includes public health, the BOCC must appoint an advisory committee on health.



Image source: Pixnio.com

Advisory committee membership must include:

- County commissioner
- Physician
- Dentist
- Optometrist
- Veterinarian
- Registered nurse
- Pharmacist
- Professional engineer
- Three members of general public

# Division of duties between a board of county commissioners that has assumed BOH powers/duties and the advisory committee on health

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## BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Make policy for local health department

Adopt local public health rules

Adjudicate disputes about local rules

Impose local public health fees

Non-delegable activities of boards of health that are required by the North Carolina Local Health Department Accreditation Standards

## ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Advise on public health matters

Carry out activities that may be delegated to advisory committees under the North Carolina Local Health Department Accreditation Standards

# N.C. Local Health Directors

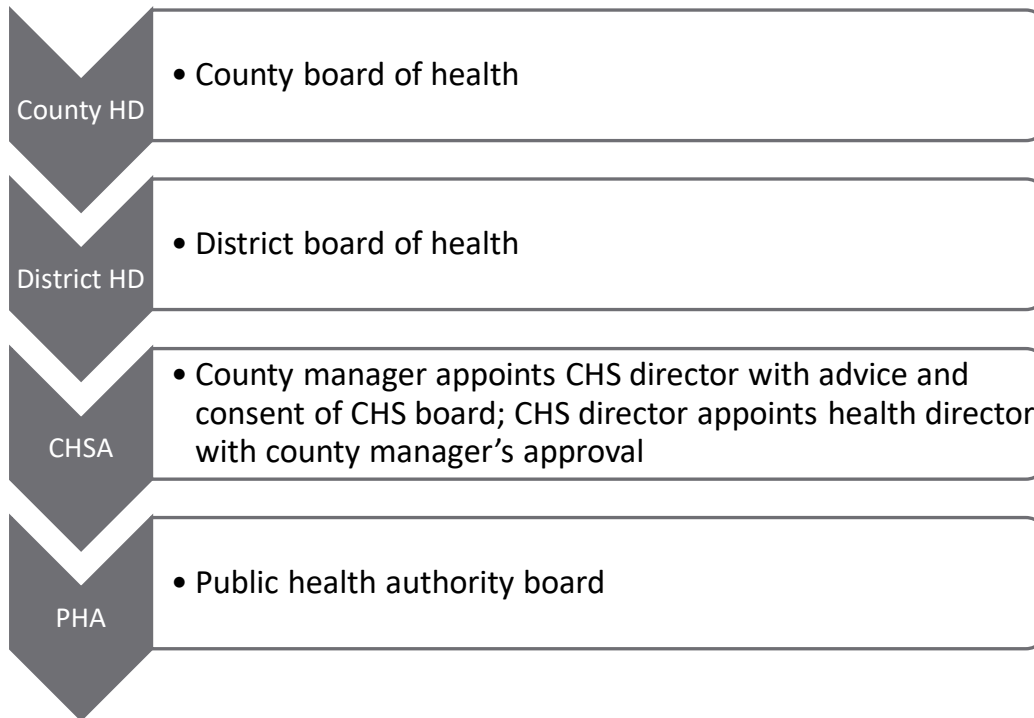


Image source: [ncalhd.org](http://ncalhd.org)

# Local health directors: Appointment & qualifications

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## WHO APPOINTS THE LOCAL HEALTH DIRECTOR?



## WHAT ARE THE EDUCATION & EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS?

A local health director must have a medical doctorate or one of the following combinations of education and experience:

- Master's in public health administration and one year experience in health programs or services;
- Master's in other public health discipline and three years' experience in health programs/services;
- Master's in public administration and two years' experience in health programs/services;
- Master's in field related to public health and three years' experience in health programs/services; or
- Bachelor's in public health administration or public administration and three years' experience in health programs/services.

# Local health director powers and duties

## G.S. 130A-41 (LHD powers & duties)

- Administer PH programs
- Hire/dismiss employees\*
- Enforce local PH rules
- Investigate & control communicable diseases
- Isolation & quarantine authority
- Enforce immunization laws
- Investigate & control rabies
- Abate public health nuisances & imminent hazards
- Disseminate PH information and promote health
- Advise local officials
- Enter contracts\*

## Elsewhere in G.S. 130A

- Rabies vaccination clinic
- Embargo authority
- Access to records
- Etc.

## Elsewhere in G.S.

- Approve jail medical plan
- Relocation of graves
- Etc.

## Regulations and other

- Compliance, budget, etc.

# Summary

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North Carolina counties are responsible for providing public health services.

The four types of local health departments that any county in North Carolina may operate or participate in are:

- County health department,
- District health department (multi-county),
- Consolidated human services agency, or
- Public health authority.

The type of local health department determines the type of local board of health.

A board of county commissioners may assume the powers and duties of a county board of health or a consolidated human services board, but not a district board of health or a public health authority board.

# Summary

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The powers and duties of a local board of health include:

- Adopting local public health rules
- Adjudicating disputes regarding local public health rules
- Making policy for the local health department
- Imposing local public health fees
- Satisfying state accreditation requirements for boards of health

When a board of county commissioners assumes the powers and duties of a board of health or consolidated human services board, it must appoint an advisory committee on health. The board of county commissioners retains rulemaking authority and may not delegate the adoption of rules to the advisory committee, but it may seek the advice and assistance of the advisory committee in developing rules.

North Carolina local health directors are appointed by boards of health, except in a CHSA, where the appointment is made by the CHS director with the approval of the county manager.

Local health directors have significant legal powers and duties.



# References

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North Carolina General Statutes, available at [ncleg.gov](http://ncleg.gov):

- G.S. 130A-34. Provision of local public health services.
- G.S. 130A-35. County board of health; appointment; terms.
- G.S. 130A-37. District board of health.
- G.S. 130A-39. Powers and duties of a local board of health.
- G.S. 130A-41. Powers and duties of local health director.
- G.S. 130A-43. Consolidated human services agency; board; director.
- G.S. Ch. 130A, Art. 2, Part 1B. Public Health Authorities Authorized.
- G.S. 153A-76. Board of commissioners to organize county government.
- G.S. 153A-77. Authority of boards of commissioners over commissions, boards, agencies, etc.

Jill D. Moore, *Ch. 38: Public Health*, in *County and Municipal Government in North Carolina*, 2d ed. Frayda S. Bluestein, ed. (UNC School of Government, 2014).

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# Acknowledgment

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Questions?

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