



In April 2016, the Georgia General Assembly enacted House Bill 885 (“H.B.” 885) creating a new independent Board of Health for Fulton County public health. Through this legislation, on July 1, 2017, the agency formerly known as the Fulton County Department of Health and Wellness officially became the Fulton County Board of Health. Like the other 158 county Boards of Health in Georgia, Fulton’s Board of Health is now closely aligned with the State of Georgia Department of Public Health.

The health department is now governed by a newly installed seven-member Board of Health with its appointed Chief Executive Officer Kathleen E. Toomey, M.D., M.P.H., serving as the District 3-2 Health Director. The Fulton County Board of Commissioners is responsible for 4 appointees to the Fulton County Board of Health. Atlanta’s Mayor, the Atlanta City Council and the Fulton County School Superintendent each appoint one member. Fulton, the largest single county health District, is one of 18 public health districts in Georgia.

Since its inception, the Board of Health has approved an intergovernmental agreement between Fulton County Government and the Board of Health for administrative support services for the operations of public health; has elected a chairperson, co-chair and secretary; and has approved working by-laws. Additional funding from the state has supported the recent hiring of seven new State leadership positions with the Board of Health including the District Health Director, Senior Deputy, Director of Nursing, Director of Epidemiology, District Administrator, and Director of Communications.

The health department operates out of eight centers across the county providing clinical and environmental health services. Vital records recently moved to a new location in the Fulton County Government Center and is one of only a handful of county registrar offices operating state-of-the art digitized vital records services.

Priorities for the Board of Health this year include intensive staff training to improve our services, particularly for nursing and environmental health, benchmarking our protocols and procedures to other health districts. We will have a strong overall focus on improved customer services in all our programs and services. The Environmental Health Division will begin strategic planning in December 2017. We hope to expand strategic planning to other key areas of the Board of Health including nursing in the coming year. Fulton is currently not an accredited health department (DeKalb Gwinnett/Newton/Rockdale and Cobb/Douglas are all accredited health departments). The strategic planning activities will serve as the foundation for the accreditation process in Fulton which we view as a priority goal for the near future.