



Colorado Counties, Inc.

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April 29, 2009

Colorado Board of Health  
Attn: Linda Shearman, Program Assistant  
Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment  
4300 Cherry Creek Drive South EDO-A5  
Denver, Colorado 80246-1530

RE: Minimum Qualifications for Public Health Directors

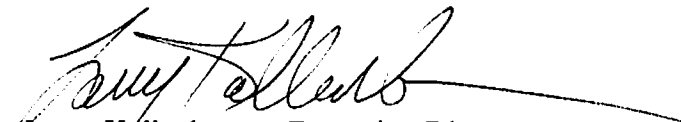
Members of the Colorado Board of Health:

While SB08-194 was debated last year counties were often told that “If you have a county nurse you can appoint them to serve as Public Health Director.” Counties were also told that this legislation wouldn’t cost them anything unless they chose to spend more money in this area. We urge you to allow commissioners, mayors and councilmembers to make independent decisions about their own jurisdictions. Many rural counties will be unable to find a qualified person who also meets your education criteria. Some top-notch public health officials in counties do not have a master’s degree. We object to the State Board of Health substituting its judgment for that of elected leaders in individual communities who are best equipped to weigh the nature of candidate’s salaries and qualifications. That is what a waiver process would do.

There may be times when a State Board of Health needs to override local decision-making but in this case you are poised to make a distinction without merit between a bachelor’s degree and a master’s degree. The existence of a master’s degree requirement means that a person with a M.A. in arts or music would not need a waiver but one with a bachelor’s degree in public health would.

We urge the Board to step back from this rule in the interest of a strong partnership between counties and the State in providing public health services. Should a real problem present itself that could be solved by requiring master’s degrees you could consider a rule at that time.

Respectfully,



Larry Kallenberger, Executive Director  
Colorado Counties, Inc.

