



# COUNTY OF SONOMA

575 ADMINISTRATION  
DRIVE, ROOM 102A  
SANTA ROSA, CA 95403

## SUMMARY REPORT

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**Agenda Date:** 10/22/2024

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**To:** County of Sonoma Board of Supervisors  
**Department or Agency Name(s):** Department of Health Services  
**Staff Name and Phone Number:** Jennifer Solito, 707-565-4774  
**Vote Requirement:** Majority  
**Supervisorial District(s):** Countywide

**Title:**

Interim Health Officer Appointment

**Recommended Action:**

- A) Adopt a Resolution appointing Dr. Karen Smith to the position of Interim Health Officer for the County of Sonoma effective October 28, 2024.
- B) Authorize the Director of Health Services to execute a professional services agreement with Dr. Karen Smith to provide Interim Health Officer services in an amount not-to-exceed \$123,616 through July 28, 2025.

**Executive Summary:**

The Board of Supervisors appoints the County Health Officer in accordance with California Health and Safety Code Section 101000. The Health Officer reports to the Board through the Director of Health Services. The County Health Officer provides leadership for the protection of public health, enforcement of public health regulations, and serves as an advisor to elected and appointed officials, members of the medical profession, and the public on matters affecting health and safety.

Dr. Tanya Phares, who was appointed County Health Officer on November 14, 2023, has notified the County of her resignation, effective October 28, 2024. As such, the County has an immediate need to appoint an Interim Health Officer pending a recruitment to permanently fill the position.

This item requests adoption of a resolution appointing Dr. Karen Smith to the position of Interim Health Officer for the County of Sonoma, effective October 28, 2024. In addition, this item requests approval to execute an agreement with Dr. Smith for Interim Health Officer services for a total not-to-exceed amount of \$123,616 reflecting approximately nine months of service. This amount represents approximately half of the estimated cost of a permanent full time Health Officer as the Interim Health Officer will not be engaging in all activities conducted by a permanent full time Health Officer including staff meetings, organizing community fora, periodic meetings with hospital and systems leadership, engaging initiatives such as street medicine, opioid response and review of medical policies and protocols. The contract will terminate upon appointment of a new permanent Health Officer following a nation-wide recruitment.

**Discussion:**

The Board of Supervisors appoints the County Health Officer in accordance with California Health and Safety Code Section 101000. The Health Officer reports to the Board through the Director of Health Services. The County Health Officer provides leadership for the protection of public health, enforcement of public health

regulations, and serves as an advisor to elected and appointed officials, members of the medical profession, and the public on matters affecting health and safety.

Dr. Tanya Phares, who was appointed Interim County Health Officer on November 14, 2023, has notified the County of her resignation, effective October 28, 2024. The Department of Health Services will soon be opening a nation-wide recruitment for a permanent Health Officer. As such, the County has an immediate need to appoint an Interim Health Officer until the permanent Health Officer is appointed by the Board of Supervisors.

The interim duties include providing medical expertise in response to emerging threats and issues, directing the clinical aspects of emergency response, and providing medical consultative advice to clinicians.

Additionally, assuming responsibility for critical departmental functions including the issuance of birth and death records, health and safety inspections of food facilities, and the oversight of medical practices and support Department efforts to improve community health in Sonoma County, and to ensure that Board of Supervisors' priorities are met. The Interim Health Officer will not be engaging in all activities conducted by a permanent full time Health Officer including staff meetings, organizing community fora, periodic meetings with hospital and systems leadership, engaging initiatives such as street medicine, opioid response and review of medical policies and protocols.

Dr. Smith is currently retired from government service and does consulting in public and community health. Dr. Smith served as the Director and State Public Health Officer of the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) from March 2015 through July 2019. Prior to her appointment to CDPH, Dr. Smith served as public health officer and deputy director of Public Health at the Napa County Health and Human Services Agency since 2004. She was medical staff for infectious disease at Queen of the Valley Medical Center in Napa since 2012 and was a faculty consultant for the Francis J. Curry International Tuberculosis Center at the University of California, San Francisco since 1997. Smith specializes in infectious disease, public health, and emergency response. Further, Dr. Karen Smith served as the County's Interim Public Health Officer in 2023, prior to the appointment of Dr. Phares, and remains on contract with the Department as a clinical consultant for specialized clinical expertise. As such, she is familiar with the Department's operations and community needs.

This item requests adoption of a resolution appointing Dr. Karen Smith to the position of Interim Health Officer for the County of Sonoma. In addition, this item requests approval to execute a professional services agreement with Dr. Karen Smith for Interim Health Officer services for an amount not-to-exceed \$123,616 through July 28, 2025. The agreement includes a provision for early termination once a permanent Health Officer is appointed. If approved, Dr. Smith will assume the role of Interim Health Officer on October 28, 2024.

**Strategic Plan:**

N/A

**Racial Equity:**

**Was this item identified as an opportunity to apply the Racial Equity Toolkit?**

No

**Prior Board Actions:**

On November 7, 2023, the Board adopted a resolution appointing Dr. Tanya Phares to the position of Health Officer for the County of Sonoma effective November 14, 2023.

On August 1, 2023, the Board A) adopted a resolution appointing Dr. Karen Smith to the position of Interim Health Officer for the County of Sonoma effective August 5, 2023; and B) authorized the Director of Health

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Services to execute a professional services agreement with Dr. Karen Smith to provide Interim Health Officer services in an amount not-to-exceed \$75,000 through February 4, 2024.

On April 18, 2023 the Board adopted a resolution appointing Dr. Kismet Baldwin-Santana to the position of Interim Health Officer for the County of Sonoma effective April 18, 2023.

On November 17, 2020 the Board adopted a resolution transitioning Dr. Sundari R. Mase from a provisional appointment to a regular appointment for the position of Health Officer for the County of Sonoma, effective November 17, 2020.

**FISCAL SUMMARY**

<b>Expenditures</b>	<b>FY 24-25 Adopted</b>	<b>FY 25-26 Projected</b>	<b>FY 26-27 Projected</b>
Budgeted Expenses	\$111,254	\$12,362	
Additional Appropriation Requested			
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$111,254</b>	<b>\$12,362</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Funding Sources</b>			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal	\$111,254	\$12,362	
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
<b>Total Sources</b>	<b>\$111,254</b>	<b>\$12,362</b>	<b>0</b>

**Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:**

The Department’s FY 24-25 budget includes appropriations for the Health Officer salaries and benefits, and the interim appointment will be funded within this existing budget. The FY 25-26 budget will account for the costs associated with the final month (\$12,362) of the interim Health Officer’s service agreement. Future year funding of 1 FTE Health Officer position will be included in the FY 25-26 budget.

<b>Staffing Impacts:</b>			
<b>Position Title (Payroll Classification)</b>	<b>Monthly Salary Range (A-I Step)</b>	<b>Additions (Number)</b>	<b>Deletions (Number)</b>
Health Officer	\$22,520-\$27,373	0	0

**Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):**

There will be no staffing impacts. Dr. Karen Smith will be filling an existing allocation in an interim capacity pending the recruitment for a permanent fill of the allocation.

**Attachments:**

Attachment 1 - Interim Health Officer Resolution

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Attachment 2 - Draft Agreement

**Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board:**

N/A