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26 August 2008

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Division of Public Health Employees  
District Health Directors

FROM: S. Elizabeth Ford, M.D., M.B.A.

SUBJECT: Governor Perdue releases the Health and Human Services Task Force Restructuring Proposal

The reorganization announcements from Governor Sonny Perdue and Commissioner B.J. Walker mark an historical moment and significant change for the Division of Public Health. I agree wholeheartedly with Commissioner Walker that the HHS Task Force proposal represents a thoughtful process to address Georgia's changing human service and healthcare needs in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The Governor's Press Release and the full Health and Human Services Task Force – Interim Report (August 26, 2008) can be accessed and viewed in their entirety by DPH employees by logging on to Governor Perdue's website at <http://gov.georgia.gov> ( <http://gov.georgia.gov/> ) or the DHR Employee Intranet at <https://intranet.dhr.state.ga.us/>.

Highlights of the HHS Task Force proposal include:

**Proposed Changes:**

- Merge the Department of Community Health with the public health and health regulation programs of DHR to make up a redesigned Department of Health.
- Create a new Department of Behavioral Health to include the mental health and addictive disease programs, currently housed within the Department of Human Resources.
- The remaining social services under DHR would become the *Department of Human Services*. Programs in this department would include: Developmental Disabilities, Aging, Division of Family and Children Services and Child Support.

**Impact to Public Health:**

- The Division of Public Health and the Office of Regulatory Services would merge with the Georgia Department of Community Health to form a new department, The Georgia Department of Health.
- Current DCH Commissioner Dr. Rhonda Medows would lead the new Department of Health.

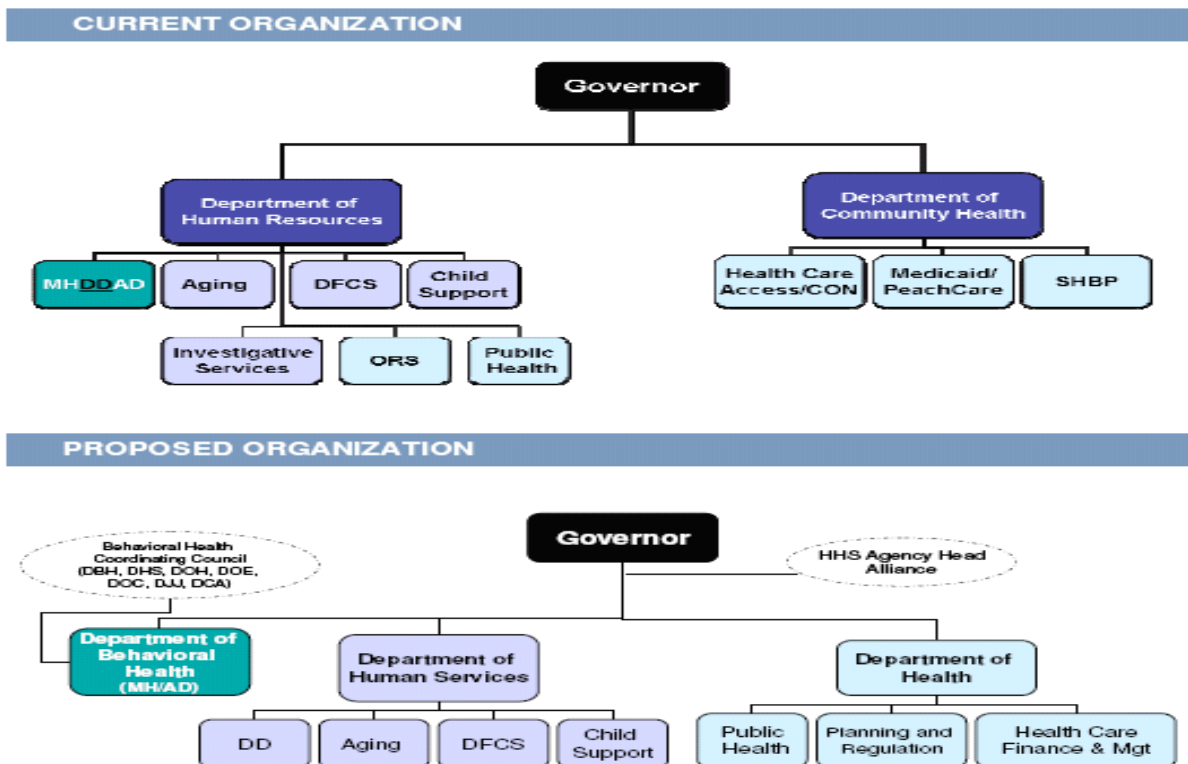
This HHS Task Force proposal does not change the normal course of business in public health as

it is organized today. We will continue to provide quality services to our customers, clients and vendors. The Task Force has provided a proposed phased implementation approach to take effect July 1, 2009. Of course, we will begin planning immediately to build the infrastructure for the Department of Health and will need everyone's help.

While these changes bring mixed emotions, they clearly define the strong possibilities for collaboration that lie ahead for the Division of Public Health and the Department of Community Health. The newly proposed Department of Health provides an opportunity for all of us currently in public health to help shape our future.

From the beginning, we placed the needs of our customers and employees first as we proposed changes for the restructuring of public health. I am eager to hear from every PH employee regardless of your level of function and responsibility. I want to capture your ideas on how best to move public health into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Please share your thoughts at [PH-DIRECTORS-FEEDBACK@dhr.state.ga.us](mailto:PH-DIRECTORS-FEEDBACK@dhr.state.ga.us).

You can expect frequent and timely communications from me in the coming weeks. You will receive a VICs date within the next few weeks for a video teleconference for all PH statewide employees. I am personally interested in hearing your thoughts, ideas and reactions to these changes and how you best see public health continuing its mission to improve the health status of Georgia's citizens. Below is an overview of the proposed organizational changes:



Thank you for your dedication to public health and let's move forward with a positive outlook and a continued commitment to a great future for Georgia.