



**Senate Public Health and Welfare  
Confirmation Hearing for Physician General  
Rachel Levine, MD.  
Wednesday, June 3, 2015**

Good Morning Chairman Vance, Chairman Kitchen, and members of the Public Health and Welfare Committee. My name is Rachel Levine and it is an honor to come before this committee and seek your approval to serve as the Physician General for the Commonwealth.

I would like to begin by saying that I recognize and applaud the critical role the Pennsylvania Legislature has played in supporting the Department of Health throughout the years. The most recent focus has been on passing laws to ensure the public's health and safety. This was evidenced with the passing of Act 139 of 2014 which expanded the availability of Naloxone to help combat the heroin and overdose epidemic that has enveloped not only the Commonwealth, but the nation as a whole.

Such examples of service, cooperation and health innovation are what will allow Pennsylvania to set the standard for health care excellence among all other states. I value the opportunity to work with you to protect and improve one of Pennsylvania's most valuable resources, the health and safety of its people.

My experience as a practicing physician, educator and medical administrator has afforded me unique qualifications to assume the role of Physician General. Before my appointment as Acting Physician General, I served as a Professor of Pediatrics and Psychiatry at the Penn State College of Medicine and a staff physician at the Penn State Hershey Medical Center. I served as Chief, of the Division of Adolescent Medicine and Eating Disorders and Vice Chair for Clinical Services in the Department of Pediatrics at the Penn State Hershey Children's Hospital. I believe that this diversity with my experience qualifies me to be an excellent medical advisor to both Governor Wolf and Secretary Murphy.

During my tenure as Acting Physician General, I have worked closely with Secretary Murphy, the Governor's office as well as other state agencies to help expand and place a new emphasis on health care and public safety for all Pennsylvanians.

I have worked with Secretary Tennis, Secretary Murphy and many others in Governor Wolf's administration on combating the opioid crisis facing our Commonwealth with prevention efforts such as the implementation of the ABC-MAP program, continuing medical education materials on prescription pain medications and state of the art addiction treatment methods. As we move forward with the implementation of Act 139 of 2014, I have signed a standing order allowing all police agencies and fire departments, who have completed the requisite training, to obtain

Naloxone and have been working diligently with Secretaries Murphy and Tennis and Commissioner Brown to ensure smooth rollout of this life saving drug.

Additionally, I have been working with Secretary Murphy to improve the Commonwealth's immunization rates for children entering Kindergarten and the 7<sup>th</sup> Grade. We are working on educational and press campaigns to highlight the importance of vaccinations, communicate their safety and efficacy and dispel rumors about possible side effects. As a Commonwealth, we can and will do better to help protect our children from these now preventable diseases.

Additionally, I am assisting Secretary Murphy and the department as a whole in working to find ways to expand access to health care, especially for those Pennsylvanians who live in rural or underserved areas and find ways to increase health care availability while decreasing delivery costs. We owe it to every citizen to get them access to the world class health care networks that we have at our disposal in Pennsylvania, and we owe it to them to bring them this health care at a fair and reasonable cost.

I am committed working with Secretary Murphy and the Governor's office to ensure that the Department of Health continues to promote healthy lifestyles, prevent injury and disease, and ensure the safe delivery of quality health care to all Pennsylvanians. It is my hope to work closely with not just this committee, but the legislature as a whole, to help improve the health of the citizens of the Commonwealth.

I want to again thank you for this opportunity to appear before you today and ask for your endorsement to serve as the Physician General, and I will be happy to take any questions you might have at this time.