

**GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY HEALTH
DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH**

EFFECTIVE DATE: SEPTEMBER 22, 2009

TITLE: USING VOLUNTEERS IN PUBLIC HEALTH

INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND:

Workforce shortages have impacted the capacity of public health to meet its mandates and fulfill its obligation to serve the health needs of communities throughout the state. Because of the workforce shortages and the increased demand for public health services, the need to use volunteers to assist with public health services has increased. The purpose of this policy is to provide the options and procedures for using volunteers in public health for emergency preparedness and response activities as well as non-emergency activities.

AUTHORITY:

The authority for using volunteers in public health may be found in the Public Health Clinic Volunteer Agreement.

GENERAL PROVISIONS:

1. The assignment and use of Department of Community Health (DCH) volunteers must be in accordance with the DCH Volunteer Form (Public Health Clinic Volunteer Agreement).
2. A volunteer is defined as someone who is willing to perform specific duties on behalf of the Department, not a County Board of Health, in a specific area without compensation for such duties.
3. There is no age requirement to serve as a DCH volunteer. However, the volunteer must meet the minimum age authorized by law for employment.
4. Volunteers may be used during times of emergency preparedness (e.g., emergency exercises, drills), emergency response (e.g., physicians providing primary care at shelters) as well as during times of non-emergency activities (e.g., nurses administering flu shots at flu clinics; nursing assistants helping with weighing and measuring babies for health screenings; secretarial assistants helping with clinic flow during WIC clinics; lay persons serving as greeters at health departments).
5. Volunteers may represent any discipline (e.g., medicine, nursing, environmental health, administrative support, nutrition) and may be used to assist with any public health duty in any of the public health programs.
6. The license of any volunteer who is a licensed health care professional (e.g., nurse, physician, physician assistant) should be verified.
7. The duties assigned to a DCH volunteer may include any duties that a DCH employee would normally perform, including the following:
 - Greeting people who arrive at clinic or assisting with clinic flow

- Providing education materials to persons in the waiting room areas
 - Retrieving and filing clinical records and documents
 - Administering vaccines as part of an immunization program
 - Ordering and dispensing drugs in accordance with approved nurse protocols
 - Transporting clients from one location to another
8. Volunteers are prohibited from operating state-owned vehicles.
 9. Volunteers must sign the DCH Volunteer Form (Public Health Clinic Volunteer Agreement) before embarking on the specific volunteer duties.
 10. The agency representative who signs the DCH Volunteer Form must be the District Health Director or his/her designee.
 11. Public health must provide appropriate training for the volunteers to perform specific assigned duties.
 12. The volunteer must be compliant with HIPAA requirements.
 13. The signed DCH Volunteer Form is to be sent to:
Georgia Department of Community Health
Director of Support Services
2 Peachtree Street, N.W., 39th Floor
Atlanta, Georgia 30303-3142
(404) 657-8979, FAX: (404) 656-4913
 14. If volunteers are used during emergency preparedness drills or exercises, the signed form may be kept at the District office instead of submitting to the address listed in item number 13.