

Tomás J. Aragón, MD, DrPH
Director and State Public Health Officer

Gavin Newsom
Governor

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Dear CDPH family,

In January 2025, I will have served as CDPH director for four years. After long discussions with my family, I have decided to retire from government service to spend more time with my family and to focus on pursuing my other interests (reading, writing, teaching, hiking, running, etc.). My time as CDPH director has been the absolute best and most memorable of my ~30 years of public health service. My last day as CDPH director will be January 31, 2025. I am currently working with the Governor's Appointment Office on the transition.

In January 2021, I was honored and privileged to become the State Public Health Officer and Director of CDPH. I came from the San Francisco Department of Public Health where I worked for 21+ years, the last 10 years as the Health Officer. I never had imagined that I would ever work for the state. I loved local public health and working for the city of my birth.

Then the COVID-19 pandemic hit, and everything changed. All of us — local and state public health — mobilized to save lives. We highly valued the state's leadership and support of local public health. CDPH and Cal HHS were awesome!!! When the CDPH director position was posted, I applied immediately. I could not pass up the opportunity to shape the future of public health for a state of 40 million people, to advocate for resources to strengthen our public health infrastructure, and to fight for health equity on a larger stage. I was humbled and honored to be selected to serve in this position at this critical time in our history. We led the state in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, saving many lives. Before, during, and since the pandemic, CDPH's Centers, Divisions, Offices, and programs protect and improve health in diverse communities across the California.

My strongest impressions of CDPH have been the enormous level of staff kindness, compassion, and commitment to public service, science, and equity. CDPH staff work 24/7 to protect and promote health and safety for the diverse communities across the state. CDPH staff inspire me every single day, and I am so honored to have had the opportunity to serve you and California.

Together, we are transforming CDPH into a learning, healing, and impactful organization. We have accomplished a lot during these past four years! Across CDPH and beyond we are institutionalizing continuous improvement, workforce development, trauma-responsive leadership development, promoting equity for all, transforming prevention in mental health and well-being, and challenging ourselves to have measurable impacts in protecting and promoting health and health equity. With our new CDPH branding we are promoting public health and building public trust and confidence!

HUGE thanks to the CDPH family for inspiring and teaching me each and every day! I have learned so much from all of you! You are all awesome! I will miss you!

HUGE thanks to Cal HHS leaders¹ and staff that supported me and us on our CDPH journey of *becoming a learning, healing, and impactful organization* (aka, "The CDPH Way").

Serving with you,



¹ especially Kim Johnson, Julie Souliere, Michelle Baass, Marko Mijic, and Mark Ghaly