

NMDOH appoints new Public Health Division Director

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SANTA FE — The New Mexico Department of Health announced the appointment of Dr. José A. Acosta, MD, MBA, MPH as the new Director for the Public Health Division on March 7. Acosta will report directly to Secretary Patrick Allen and assume his new role starting April 1.

“I’m delighted that Dr. Acosta has accepted the challenge to step into the role as leader of our Public Health Division. He has done outstanding work in his current role leading the Developmental Disabilities Supports Division through a challenging time, and I’m confident he has the public health, medical and leadership background and experience to take public health to the next level, as DOH works to achieve its goal for New Mexico to become the healthiest state in the nation by 2040,” Allen said.

The Public Health Division works with individuals, families, and communities in New Mexico to achieve optimal health. The division provides public health leadership by developing health policy, sharing expertise with the community, ensuring access to coordinated systems of care, and delivering services to promote health and prevent disease, injury, disability and premature death. Public health focuses statewide on cost-effective, evidence-based programs that improve health outcomes, efforts to prevent and control infectious diseases, local and regional emergency preparedness planning/response, and ensuring access to health care services.

Acosta brings a wealth of experience as a results-driven executive healthcare leader with expertise in public health, operations management, service optimization, patient safety, quality assurance and financial management. His proven track record as a skilled team leader includes strengths in staff training, strategic problem-solving, collaboration skills, and resource

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management. He is fluent in both English and Spanish.

“I am truly humbled and honored to accept the role of Director of the Public Health Division at the New Mexico Department of Health. I am deeply committed to the Secretary’s goal of making New Mexico the healthiest state by 2040. I look forward to collaborating with our incredible team and partners, as together, we strive to improve the health outcomes of our communities,” Acosta said.

Previously serving as the director for the Developmental Disabilities Supports Division since June and as the chief medical officer for NMDOH in 2022, Acosta has a distinguished career. He served as the Executive Medical Director for the U.S. Navy Pacific Fleet, providing trusted healthcare advice on health service optimization and medical plans for service members and their families. Acosta oversaw reporting from multiple large organizations, offering decision-making and negotiating expertise on medical equipment, personnel and resources.

Among his key accomplishments is the role he played in streamlining crisis/medical communications between local and federal agencies during Hurricane Maria in 2017. He established a positive team culture and achieved strategic corporate objectives, boasting a 92% compliance rate with health and wellness goals.

Acosta’s extensive education includes a Master of Public Health (Epidemiology) from TH Chan Harvard School of Public Health, a Master of Business Administration from Regis University, a Trauma/Critical Care Fellowship from the University of California San Diego, a Surgical Residency from the University of New Mexico Affiliated Program, an MD from Ponce Health Sciences University, and a Bachelor of Arts in Biology from Washington University in St. Louis. He is a recipient of the Legion of Merit (five awards) in addition to various personal, unit, service, and campaign awards.

Residing in Placitas, New Mexico, Acosta lives with his wife of 33 years, Mary, a radiologist at the University of New Mexico. The couple have two children, Miguel, an Economist at the Federal Reserve, and Lourdes, a Naval Officer.

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