



Biography

Umair A. Shah, MD, MPH

Secretary of Health

Washington State Department of Health

Umair A. Shah, MD, MPH, was appointed Secretary of Health by Governor Jay Inslee and joined the Department of Health in December 2020.

Prior to this role, Dr. Shah served as Executive Director and Local Health Authority for Harris County Public Health (HCPH) – the nationally accredited county public health agency for the nation’s 3rd largest county with 4.7 million people.

Dr. Shah earned his BA (philosophy) from Vanderbilt University; his MD from the University of Toledo Health Science Center; and completed an Internal Medicine Residency, Primary Care/General Medicine Fellowship, and MPH (management), at the University of Texas Health Science Center. He also completed an international health policy internship at World Health Organization headquarters in Switzerland.

Upon completing training, Dr. Shah began a distinguished career as an emergency department physician at Houston’s Michael DeBakey VA Medical Center. He started his formal public health journey as Chief Medical Officer at Galveston County’s Health District before joining HCPH to oversee its clinical health system and infectious disease portfolio. Under his leadership, HCPH has won numerous national awards including recognition as Local Health Department of the Year from the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) in 2016.

Dr. Shah currently holds numerous leadership positions with respected entities like the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine; U.S. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention; Trust for America’s Health; Network for Public Health Law; and Texas Medical Association. He previously served as president of NACCHO (and its Texas affiliate) representing the nation’s nearly 3,000 local health departments.

Over his career, Dr. Shah has been a clinician, an innovator, an educator, and a leader in health.