



## Recommendation for Action

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**File #: 23-2110, Agenda Item #: 41.**

**6/1/2023**

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### **Posting Language**

Approve the appointment of Desmar Walkes, M.D. as the Health Authority, and designation of Ming Tang, M.D. and Sharon Melville, M.D. as the Alternate Health Authorities for Austin/Travis County.

### **Lead Department**

Austin Public Health.

### **Fiscal Note**

This item has no fiscal impact.

### **Prior Council Action:**

December 7, 2017- Council previously approved the appointment of Dr. Philip Huang as the Health Authority with two alternate Health Authorities.

February 2, 2019 - Council previously approved the appointment of Dr. Mary Ann Rodriguez as the Interim Health Authority with two alternate Health Authorities.

October 3, 2019 - Council previously approved the appointment of Dr. Mark Escott as the Interim Health Authority with one alternate Health Authority.

March 12, 2020 - Council previously approved the appointment of Dr. Mark Escott as the Interim Health Authority with one alternate Health Authority.

September 17, 2020 - Council previously approved the appointment of Dr. Mark Escott as the Interim Health Authority with three alternate Health Authorities.

March 25, 2021 - Council previously approved the appointment of Dr. Mark Escott as the Interim Health Authority with three alternate Health Authorities.

May 20, 2021 - Council previously approved the appointment of Dr. Desmar Walkes as the Health Authority and designation of Ming Tang, M.D. and Sharon Melville, M.D. as the alternate Health Authorities for Austin/Travis County.

### **For More Information:**

Adrienne Sturup, Director, 512-972-5167; Kymberley Maddox, Assistant Director; Juanita Jackson, Business Process Consultant, 512-972-6163.

### **Additional Backup Information:**

This item requests Council approval for the appointment of Dr. Desmar Walkes as Health Authority for Austin/Travis County. Dr. Walkes has designated Dr. Ming Tang and Dr. Sharon Melville as Alternate Health Authorities.

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Dr. Walkes has thirty-four years of experience in health care. She graduated from the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston in 1986 and completed her post graduate training at Baylor College of Medicine. Dr. Walkes served as the Local Health Authority for Bastrop County and provided medical leadership for the Bastrop County's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This included planning and maintaining a free test site for Bastrop County residents, oversight of a Vaccine Planning Taskforce, and guidance to local policy makers, schools, long term care facilities, and business. Dr. Walkes served in this role from January 2005 to May 2021.

Dr. Walkes is an advocate for improved quality and access to health care for the uninsured, underinsured, and indigent members of the community. She has served as a Medical Director for A+ Lifestyle Medical Group, Lincoln Clinic, Bastrop Sleep Lab and the Smithville Community Clinic, as well as a Medical Missionary Licensed Minister for Shepperd of the Hills Christian Church participating in worldwide medical mission trips to Central and South America, Asia, and Africa.

Dr. Walkes meets all the requirements of Chapter 121 of the Texas Health and Safety code to be designated as a Health Authority.

Under state law (Section 121.029 of the Texas Health and Safety Code), the Health Authority may delegate any power or duty imposed on the Health Authority to a properly qualified physician to act while the Health Authority is absent or incapacitated. The physician designated by the health authority must:

- Meet license and residence requirements
- Be appointed as a designee in the same manner as the Health Authority
- File the Oath of Office, executed by a duly appointed Notary Public with the Texas Department of State Health Services

The delegation is effective during the term of the Health Authority making the delegation. The Health Authority is responsible for the acts of the physician to whom the powers have been delegated, and the entity that appoints the Health Authority must have procedures in place to prevent duplication of authority and provide notice to the director of Austin Public Health (APH) when authority is transferred. APH has had a "Delegation of Back-Up Health Authority" in effect since July 1, 2000.

#### **Alternate Health Authority**

Dr. Ming Tang received his medical degree from the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston and a master's degree in healthcare management from the University of Texas at Dallas. He has a license to practice in the State of Texas and is a Diplomate of the American Board of Family Medicine. He is also a Registered Pharmacist in Texas. His medical education included an internship and residency in Family Medicine at Brackenridge Hospital. Dr. Tang currently serves as the physician in the Refugee Program at APH. Dr. Tang previously served as a family medicine physician with the City of Austin and CommUnity Care. Dr. Tang meets all the requirements of the Texas Health and Safety Code to be designated as an Alternate Health Authority.

Dr. Sharon Melville received her medical degree from the University of Texas Medical School at Houston and a master's degree in Public Health from the University of Massachusetts School of Public Health. She completed a residency in preventive medicine at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center. Dr. Melville has served as the Regional Medical Director for the Texas Department of State Health Service (DSHS) Health Service Region 7 since June 2013. She previously worked at the DSHS Central Office in Austin as the manager of the TB/HIV/STD Epidemiology and Surveillance Branch for 17 years. Prior to joining DSHS, Dr. Melville was assistant professor of family and community medicine at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center in Worcester, MA.

Doctors Tang and Melville meet all the requirements of the Texas Health and Safety Code to be designated as

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an Alternate Health Authority

**PERFORMANCE**

Related Department Goal: Promote a healthy community by preventing chronic and communicable diseases and promoting improvements in social/economic/environmental factors that will result in an improved overall health status and a reduction of health disparities.