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Health Department

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April 25, 2007

Rick Talbert
Chair, Tacoma-Pierce County Board of Health
747 Market Street, Room 1200
Tacoma, WA 98402

Dear Chair Talbert:

With this letter I am informing the Board of Health of my decision to retire from my position as Director of Health for the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department. My departure will be effective August 1, 2007.

I have been in the position as director since December of 1992. The past 15 years have been both a continuing challenge and an extra-ordinarily rewarding experience for me. I have made many friendships, started or partnered on many new initiatives that I hope have contributed to the better health of my community.

It is time for me to move on to new challenges. And it is a good time to leave the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department. The Department is in sound shape. Our budget balances. We have an outstanding set of managers to continue the programs of the Department. They oversee a staff that is both very professional and productive but also creative in taking on the most difficult public health problems affecting our community.

I wish to thank the Board for their confidence in me and for their on-going support over the last 15 years. All of my endeavors could not have happened without this support.

In order to assure a smooth transition, I would be happy to meet with the Board to discuss the logistics of my leaving.

Sincerely,

Federico Cruz-Urbe, MD MPH

TPCHD-SR 0645

3629 South D Street
Tacoma WA 98418-6813

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Federico Cruz-Urbe, MD, MPH, Director of Health

253 798-6500

800 992-2456

TDD: 253 798-6050

From: Federico Cruz
To: ALLSTAFF
Date: 5/11/2007 10:52 AM
Subject: director's retirement

Recently I submitted a retirement letter to the Board of Health. My last day at the dept will be August 1st. Although this is not that far away, I have been in discussions with the Board about my retiring for several months and the Board and I are committed to a smooth and successful changeover. Fortunately, we have outstanding managers who will continue to lead staff through this passage and beyond.

When the Board asked why I was leaving, my answer was straightforward: it was time to go. I am having major surgery in the near future(knee replacement) and a probable second surgery in the fall. This has caused me to rethink my current situation. I realized that I've accomplished the key tasks that I set out for myself when I came here. And the department is ready for a new leader to take our mission into the future.

So much has happened over the last 15 years. Despite paltry funding and inconsistent political support, our department has become a living breathing model for how a governmental agency can work with its community and create healthier conditions for people to work, play and raise a family.

I am very proud of you and what you have made of this department. Despite some of the unconventional ideas and the often frenetic pace, your willingness to work with me in order to make a difference in our community is truly amazing. I expect to hear in the future about the continuing wonderful, brash, and envelope pushing efforts you will do to advance public health here in Pierce County.

As part of the transition process, the management team has been working on a plan to address key departmental vacancies to assure that the dept's work continues to move forward.