

Medicine and Public Health in Jacksonville: A History of Collaboration

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Editor's Note: On March 18, 2009, DCHD conducted a history project and dedicated its new Smith auditorium to celebrate its 120th Anniversary. The recent dedication of public health facilities and the revelation of artifacts documenting the history of public health and medicine focus attention on Jacksonville's unique history of collaboration between medicine and public health. Both the medical and public health communities can share pride in this leadership. (See Tables 2 & 3 at dcmonline.org under current NEFM journal)

Modern medicine and public health had similar origins in the 19th century and early 20th century but rapidly evolved with major distinctions in their training, practice and research through most of the 20 century. They both played a major role in the early development of the city of Jacksonville and the Northeast region of the state, but that history also provides rich insights into how public health emerged in the state of Florida through extensive involvement and support from the medical community. While the separation of medicine and public health has been lamented throughout much of the country, collaboration between medicine and public health in Florida continues to emerge and has been recognized as a national model. Recent developments flowing from this collaboration show great promise to benefit the institutions of both public health and medicine, particularly in Jacksonville.

The history of medicine and public health in Jacksonville, Florida provides rich insights into the evolution of the practice of modern medicine and public health in the United States. Although both can trace their origins to antiquity, modern medicine has its origins in the development of the anesthesia and germ theory in the mid 19th century and the reforms of medical education following the Flexner Report in the early 20th century. Modern public health had a similar historical time frame with the urban sanitation movement and the early applications of epidemiology by John Snow in the mid 19th century. Formal education for public health also began early in the 20th century. Abraham Flexner had a major leadership role in formalizing public health education just a few years after the highly regarded Carnegie Report on medical education for which he was lead author.¹

Early organization of medicine in the U.S. can be seen with the formation of the American Medical Association (AMA) in 1847.² Organized medicine in Florida followed soon after with the formation of the Duval County Medical Society (DCMS) in Jacksonville in 1853,³ even though the densest population in Florida was located in North Central Florida and most of Florida was uninhabited.⁴ DCMS invited physicians from around the state to a meeting in Jacksonville in 1874, when the Florida Medical Association (FMA) was

established. The formation of the American Public Health Association (APHA) occurred in 1872,² and the first meeting of the Florida Public Health Association (FPHA) did not occur until 1930.⁴

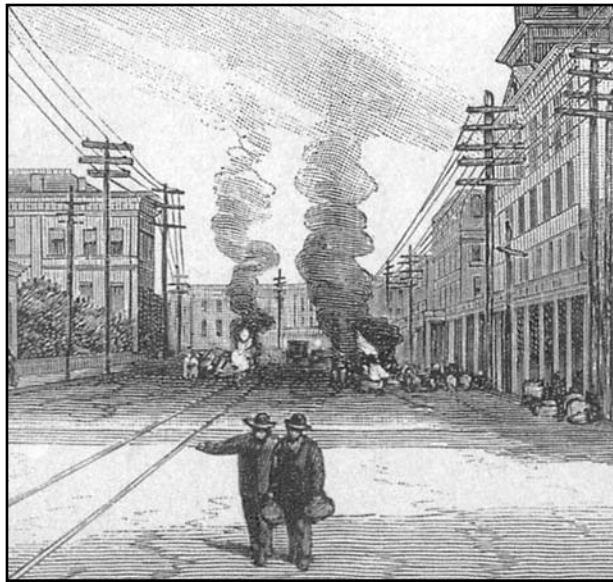
Table 1 Major Public Health Events

1853	Duval County Medical Society founded
1874	Florida Medical Association founded
July 28, 1888	First authenticated instance of yellow fever (Beginning of Jacksonville epidemic)
Feb. 20, 1889	FL State Board of Health created (First State Health Officer appointed)
July 14, 1889	First Jacksonville Health Officer appointed
May 3, 1901	Great Jacksonville fire (Most public health & DCMS records destroyed)
Jan. 12, 1939	Duval County Health Unit opened
Oct. 14, 1940	First public health services discussion
1967-1968	City & county governments consolidate
1969-1970	State Board of Health in Jacksonville abolished & 25 health and social service agencies combined into FL Department of Health & Rehabilitative Services (HRS), Tallahassee.
Jan. 1, 1971	Jacksonville City and Duval County health units merged under FL Statute 154. Becomes consolidated City-County Health Department
1996	Florida Department of Health established

Medicine and public health were in the forefront of the battles against the major epidemics of the 19th century, and Jacksonville was frequently the center of public health and medicine in the later part of 19th century and the first half of the 20th century.⁴ Infectious diseases, including yellow fever, malaria, tuberculosis, influenza and syphilis were dominant threats to the health of the public through much of this era. The yellow fever epidemic of 1888 in Jacksonville triggered the forerunners of both the city/county health department and the state department of health.⁴ A State Board of Health was authorized by Florida's Constitution in 1885 through leadership of the FMA, but the State Board was not created until after Jacksonville's yellow fever epidemic of 1888. Following the epidemic, the Florida Legislature enacted statutes in 1889 which established the State Board of Health

and the position of State Health Officer, and both were located in Jacksonville until 1969. The headquarters building of the State Board of Health was established on Julia Street in 1911, which now houses the Florida Museum of Medicine and Public Health.

The first city health officer was also appointed in 1888, and this position was continued until the city and county health units were consolidated in 1971, following consolidation of Jacksonville city and county government in 1968.⁵ County Health Units, authorized under a 1930 state law, gradually became more prominent with their eligibility for state and federal funding in contrast to the local tax base funding of city health departments.⁴ Newspaper accounts in Jacksonville pointed to the need to utilize the city funding to create the



Jacksonville street scene in 1888 showing fires in the street. It was believed this was one good way to combat the spread of yellow fever.

capacity to access state and federal funding, providing strong rationale and support by the DCMS for the consolidation of the city and county health departments.

Medicine and public health were virtually indistinguishable at the beginning of the 20th century. Physicians served in both roles with little specific training differentiating the two areas of responsibility. Medical education began a major transformation to university-based doctoral degrees with relatively standardized curricula following the Flexner report in 1911. Similarly, creation of graduate schools of public health that were separate from schools of medicine started with the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health in 1918.¹ Medicine and public health grew apart over the decades as the science and body of knowledge for both expanded dramatically during the 20th century. The resulting “schism” between medicine and public health and the lack of collaboration drew increasing attention at the end of the century, particularly with the seminal work, *Medicine and Public Health: Power of Collaboration*, published by the New York Academy of Medicine (NYAM) in 1997.²

The importance of collaboration between medicine and public health in Florida was showcased in the NYAM’s monograph with a case study describing the coordinated efforts of both organized medicine and public health to create a Florida Department of Health in 1996. Recent collaboration between medicine and public health in Jacksonville again places this community at the forefront of working together on pressing health issues, although infectious diseases are no longer the threatening problems they once were. The DCMS and the DCHD are lead agencies in coordinating community efforts to establish electronic health record systems that will improve the quality and reduce the cost of care. One accomplishment was helping the community to receive a state grant of \$407,000 for community electronic health information exchange. Another resulted in the federal designation of Northeast Florida as one of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) demonstration sites for a study of the effect of financial incentives for electronic health records for primary care providers on key quality measures.⁶

Another recent award was for the collaboration between the University of Florida, College of Medicine-Jacksonville and the DCHD as a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) sponsored Association of American Medical Colleges designated Regional Medical and Public Health Education Center for Graduate Medical Education (RMPHEC-GME).⁷ The Jacksonville site is one of only two in the Southeastern United States, with most of the other 11 RMPHEC-GMEs affiliated with prominent medical centers in Boston and New York. The collaboration in Jacksonville also reflects a model for building public health capacity.⁸

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Table 2

Health Officers & Directors: City of Jacksonville and Duval County

1889-1893	Charles J. Burroughs, MD	Jacksonville City Health Officer
1893-1894	Claude Joyner, MD	Jacksonville City Health Officer
1895-1897	Joseph L. Romero, MD	Jacksonville City Health Officer
1897-1901	Claude Joyner, MD	Jacksonville City Health Officer
1901-1908	Francis D. Miller, MD	Jacksonville City Health Officer
1907	Terry Upchurch, MD	Jacksonville City Health Officer
1908-1910	Joseph L. Romero, MD	Jacksonville City Health Officer
1910-1917	Charles Terry, MD	Jacksonville City Health Officer
1917-1925	William W. MacDonnell, MD	Jacksonville City Health Officer
1928-1953	Weiland W. Rogers, MD	Jacksonville City Health Officer
1938-1945	Kolbein K. Waering, MD	Duval County Health Unit Director
1946-1946	Lorenzo Parks, MD	Duval County Health Unit Director
1947-1965	Thomas E. Morgan, MD	Duval County Health Unit Director
1965-1968	Patricia Cowdery*	Duval County Health Unit Director
1953-1971	Edward R. Smith, MD	Jacksonville City Health Officer
1971-1973	Edward R. Smith, MD	Jacksonville City Health Officer &, Duval County Health Department Director
1973- 1985	Samuel Rowley, MD	Jacksonville City Health Officer** & Duval County Health Department Director
1985-1987	Dennis Cookro, MD	Duval County Health Department Director
1987-1996	James W. Walker, MD	Duval/Nassau/St Johns/Flagler/ Clay County District Health Unit Director
1992-2000	James T. McGibony, Jr. -	Duval County Health Dept. Deputy Director
1993-2005	Jeffrey L. Goldhagen, MD, MPH -	Duval County Health Department Director
2005-2006	Vicky Vance, BA -	Duval County Health Department Acting Director
2006-2006	Belinda Johnson-Cornett, RNC, MS, MBA	Duval County Health Department Acting Director
Aug 11, 2006 - Present	Robert G. Harmon, MD, MPH .	Duval County Health Department Director

* Dr Cowdery also served as Director of the Department of Health, Welfare, and Bio-environmental Services from 1972 to 1988, to whom the city health officer reported within city government.

**Title of "City Health Officer" is still used in local newspaper.

**Table 3 State Health Officers for Florida State Board of Health
(located in Jacksonville, FL)**

1889-1917	J. Y. Porter, MD	State Board of Health
1917-1919	W. H. Cox, MD	State Board of Health
1919-1921	R. N. Greene, MD	State Board of Health
1921-1925	R. C. Turck, MD	State Board of Health
1925-1929	B. I. Arms, MD	State Board of Health
1929-1935	Henry Hanson, MD	State Board of Health
1935-1939	W. A. McPhaul, MD	State Board of Health
1939-1940	A. B. McCreary, MD	State Board of Health
1941-1942	W. H. Pickett, MD	State Board of Health
1942-1945	Henry Hanson, MD	State Board of Health
1945-1974*	Wilson T. Sowder, MD	State Board of Health
1961-1962 (Acting)	A. V. Hardy, MD	State Board of Health
1974-1979	E. Charlton Prather, MD	Department of HRS **
1979-1981	James Howell, MD	Department of HRS
1982-1985	Stephen King, MD	Department of HRS
1985-1986	James Howell, MD	Department of HRS
1986-1987	E. Charlton Prather, MD	Department of HRS
1988-1995	Charles Mahan, MD	Department of HRS
1995-1996	Wil Blechman, MD	Department of HRS
1997-1998	James Howell, MD	Secretary, Department of Health
1999-2001	Robert Brook, MD	Secretary, Department of Health
2001-2005	John Agwunobi, MD	Secretary, Department of Health
2005-2007	M. Rony Francois, MD	Secretary, Department of Health
2007-current	Ana Viamonte Ros, MD	State Surgeon General

*leave 10/61-
12/62

** Health & Rehabilitative Services