

## Brown School of Public Health, Health Dept., form academic partnership

PROVIDENCE – Rhode Island now has two accredited public health entities – the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) and the Brown University School of Public Health – which have launched a new academic partnership aimed at building healthy communities and creating a hub of public health research and innovation in Rhode Island.

This alliance makes RIDOH an “academic health department”, or a teaching health department—the public health equivalent of a “teaching hospital” affiliation that formalizes the relationship between medical schools and hospitals.

The partnership is one outgrowth of the newly formed RIDOH Academic Center, which aims to ensure a highly skilled public health workforce focused on innovation, research, evaluation, quality improvement, and academic collaboration. The Academic Center, under development since **NICOLE ALEXANDER-SCOTT, MD, MPH** was appointed Director of Health, has four components: the Continuous Quality Improvement Program, which applies the continuous quality improvement training that staff engage in; the Workforce and Career Development Program, which aims to instill a culture of learning within the Department; the Public Health Education Academy, which formalizes partnerships with Rhode Island academic institutions and

develops a cadre of Public Health Scholars; and the Public Health Research Laboratory, which will drive public health research to advance innovative public health outcomes.

“This new collaboration will allow us to develop, implement, and evaluate cutting-edge public health interventions that will help improve health outcomes and build healthier communities in every zip code in Rhode Island,” said Dr. Alexander-Scott. “Good public health does not happen without research and collaboration. I’m proud to be entering into this partnership with the Brown University School of Public Health, and to establish a national model for partnerships between academic institutions and public health departments.”

“The Brown University School of Public Health and RIDOH have worked side by side for the well-being of Rhode Islanders for many years as we strive together to improve population health. This new agreement strengthens our ties to better translate public health science into policy and delivery of services across the state,” said **TERRIE FOX WETLE, MS, PHD**, Dean of the Brown University School of Public Health.

The partnership builds upon years of close cooperation and will include: research and evaluation collaboration, data exchanges, staff and faculty exchanges, public health job placement initiatives, teaching agreements, and technical assistance and consultation.

In particular, the two agencies will:

- Co-lead the Public Health Academic Working Group that was established to place students in the RIDOH Academic Center’s Public Health Scholars Program to work on pressing public health projects for academic credit;
- Promote opportunities for collaborative research with School of Public Health faculty and RIDOH staff;
- Refine the mechanisms for RIDOH staff to be reviewed for faculty appointments at the School of Public Health, and for School of Public Health faculty to participate on RIDOH committees and project teams; and
- Establish a centralized mechanism for sharing public health data and information, such as [preventoverdose.org](http://preventoverdose.org), which supports the work of Governor Gina M. Raimondo’s Overdose Prevention and Intervention Task Force to reduce overdose deaths by one-third in three years.

The School of Public Health was accredited recently in June by the Council on Education for Public Health, to join with RIDOH that was accredited by the Public Health Accreditation Board in November 2015 to become the state’s public health- accredited entities. ❖



### There’s no stopping you

Aetna is proud to support the members of the Rhode Island Medical Society.

**aetna**<sup>®</sup>

Aetna is the brand name used for products and services provided by one or more of the Aetna group of subsidiary companies, including Aetna Life Insurance Company and its affiliates (Aetna).

©2016 Aetna Inc.  
2016023