

House Resolution 916

By: Representatives Cooper of the 43rd, Clark of the 101st, Dempsey of the 13th, Hatchett of the 150th, and Kaiser of the 59th

A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing and commending Commissioner Brenda Fitzgerald, MD, and the Department
2 of Public Health; and for other purposes.

3 WHEREAS, the Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) was created in 2011 as an
4 independent department for the first time in 30 years, in record time, and with no added cost
5 to the State of Georgia's budget; and

6 WHEREAS, DPH is responsible for collaborating and coordinating with health departments
7 in all 159 Georgia counties, as well as 18 Public Health Districts; and

8 WHEREAS, DPH's main areas of expertise and jurisdiction include: health promotion and
9 disease prevention, maternal and child health, infectious disease and immunization,
10 environmental health, epidemiology, emergency preparedness and response, emergency
11 medical services, pharmacy, nursing, volunteer health care, the Office of Health Equity, Vital
12 Records, and the State Public Health Laboratory; and

13 WHEREAS, it spearheaded reforms to the Women, Infants and Children program that
14 reduced fraud, improved services, and saved taxpayer dollars; and

15 WHEREAS, under DPH's leadership, 101 school districts have adopted Georgia's "100%
16 Tobacco-Free School" policy, meaning no student, staff member, or school visitor is
17 permitted to use any tobacco product or E-cigarette at any time on school property; and

18 WHEREAS, DPH, through the Georgia Shape Program, led Georgia to become the first state
19 in the nation to implement the Presidential Youth Fitness Program, and won awards from the
20 Harvard Kennedy School, the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials, and the
21 Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs for its work to combat childhood obesity;
22 and

23 WHEREAS, 529 school districts have taken the Georgia Shape "Power-Up for 30" pledge
24 to integrate more physical activity into the school day, helping to roll back childhood obesity
25 rates, improve classroom productivity, and lay the foundation for a healthier long-term
26 lifestyle; and

27 WHEREAS, DPH has partnered with the Georgia Hospital Association, Georgia OBGyn
28 Society, March of Dimes, Georgia Chapter of American Academy of Pediatrics, and others
29 to significantly reduce early elective deliveries, preterm births, and infant mortality in our
30 state, including a drop in national infant mortality ranking from 44 in 2012 to 31 in 2014; and

31 WHEREAS, 98.3 percent of Georgia children enrolling in kindergarten have received all
32 required vaccinations, including the Measles, Mumps and Rubella vaccine; and

33 WHEREAS, DPH implemented a nationally recognized and widely adopted response to
34 handling the return of Americans exposed to the Ebola virus during the current crisis in West
35 Africa; and

36 WHEREAS, DPH instituted a state-wide telehealth network to expand access to health care
37 and increase responsiveness across Georgia, especially in rural areas; and

38 WHEREAS, DPH was awarded the ASTHO and United Health Foundation's 2014 America's
39 Health Rankings Champion Award, given in recognition of the department's consistently
40 improved health outcomes over the course of the last quarter century.

41 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that
42 the members of this body commend Brenda Fitzgerald, MD, Commissioner of the Georgia
43 Department of Public Health and all of her employees for their tireless efforts to prevent
44 disease, injury, and disability; promote health and well-being; and prepare for and respond
45 to disasters.

46 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized
47 and directed to make appropriate copies of this resolution available for distribution to Brenda
48 Fitzgerald, MD.