

Wheeling-Ohio County Health Department
Health Officers for Wheeling & Ohio County, West Virginia

In 1832 the City of Wheeling created a Board of Health. In March of 1869 an ordinance passed creating the position of Health Officer for the City of Wheeling. Listed below are the 25 men and women who have served as Health Officer for Wheeling and Ohio County.

Name	Dates Served	Notable Events
James E. Reeves, M.D.	1869 - 1872	First Wheeling Health Officer April 13, 1869, member of the West Virginia State Board of Health 1881-1885, Founding member of the WV State Medical Association 1867, President of the American Public Health Association 1885.
S. L. Jepson, M.D.	1873 - 1878	First West Virginia State Health Commissioner, member of the West Virginia State Board of Health 1913-1920, member of the West Virginia Public Health Association Hall of Fame
D. B. Ward, M.D.	1877 - 1878	Acting
Tom O. Edwards, M.D.	1879 - 1884	
Geo. I. Garrison, M.D.	1885 - 1886	
Robert J. Reed, M.D.	1887 - 1888	
Geo. I. Garrison, M.D.	1889 - 1890	Health Officer assigned space in the City Building
T. P. Shearer, M.D.	1891	
J. A. Campbell, M.D.	1891	Acting
S. L. S. Spragg, M.D.	1891 - 1892	
J. W. McCoy, M.D.	1893 - 1894	
J. G. Walden, M.D.	1895	
S. L. Jepson, M.D.	1895 - 1900	
W. W. Spargo, M.D.	1901	
Andrew Wilson, M.D.	1902	Acting
Wm. C. Etzler, M.D.	1903 - 1904	
I. P. Birney, M.D.	1905 - 1906	
W. H. McLain, M.D.	1907 - 1916	First milk ordinance in Wheeling
M. B. Williams, M.D.	1917 - 1918	1918 Flu Epidemic
W. H. McLain, M.D.	1919 - 1933	1925 creation of the Wheeling-Ohio County Health Department/Board of Health by City and County
R. M. Pedicord, M.D.	1933 - 1939	
Harry A. Smith, M.D.	1939 - 1942	
John S. Gaynor, M.D.	1942	
Andrew Niehaus, M.D.	1943	
John W. Gilmore, M.D.	1944 - 1955	
Thomas L. Thomas, M.D.	1955	Acting
John W. Gilmore, M.D.	1956	Resigned November 7, 1956
Thomas L. Thomas, M.D.	1957 - 1998	First Clean Indoor Air Regulation, member of the West Virginia Public Health Association Hall of Fame, longest serving Health Officer, designed current office.
Janice C. Sobray, M.D.	1998	February 1-September 30, 1998
William C. Mercer, M.D.	1998	Appointed 10/1/98, Current Health Officer

Public health in Wheeling and Ohio County can be traced back before the State of West Virginia was formed. The earliest written account concerning the health of the people of Wheeling is recorded in the minute books of the city on Friday, October 19, 1832. On this date the city council appointed thirteen men to a Board of Health. The Board was given power to select and prepare a house for a public hospital, staff it with physicians and nurses, supply beds and bedding, and provide provisions. They were also to report and publish from time to time "the state of the public health" whenever an epidemic existed. The sum of two hundred and fifty dollars was appropriated to carry out this order.