

**DATE:** January 24, 2008

**SUBJECT:** Tennessee Institute of Public Health Update

**ACTION RECOMMENDED:** Information

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:** The Tennessee Institute of Public Health (TNIPH) is moving into a second phase of development with the following key actions:

The THEC and TNIPH are very pleased that Dr. Elizabeth J. Fuller accepted a leadership position with the Institute, effective January 1, 2008. Dr. Fuller recently received her Public Health doctorate in Sociomedical Sciences from Columbia University, New York. Her MSPH in Health Policy is from the University of Alabama at Birmingham and her BA in Political Science from Emory University. Dr. Fuller has extensive experience (in New York, Atlanta, and Tennessee) in directing grants and projects in areas such as public health advocacy and preparedness, disaster preparedness, children in poverty, effective health marketing, and deterrence for juvenile offenders. Under the direction of Dr. Jo Edwards, remarkable progress has been made in getting the Institute underway, and she will continue to work with TNIPH. Robert Wood Johnson grant funding is supporting Dr. Fuller’s half-time position and a buy-out of a portion of Dr. Edwards’ time from her Middle Tennessee State University positions.

The TNIPH Board of Directors and stakeholder advisory team are currently developing a strategic plan for the Institute through facilitation by Sylvia James, Dannemiller Tyson and Associates. Ms. James has served as consultant for the development of strategic plans for similar public health institutes in other states. The contract with the consulting firm is funded by the Institute’s Robert Wood Johnson grant.

Institute staff are working with Department of Health administration to construct the best calendar and avenues for the release of the *2007 Tennessee County Health Ranking* and individual county profiles. The release is expected in early February. The *Ranking* adopts the public health indices of the Wisconsin Population Health Institute and the United Health Foundation’s (UHF) state rankings. The UHF 2007 ranking places Tennessee at 47<sup>th</sup>, a one-place move upward from last year’s 48<sup>th</sup>. The purpose of the TNIPH’s *Tennessee County Health Ranking* is to provide county leaders with specific information about health behavior patterns to aid in resource allocation decisions and public health advocacy.