



AUDIT SUMMARY

Department of Public Health

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Fiscal Years Ended June 30, 2022 and 2023

ABOUT THE AGENCY



The Department of Public Health (DPH) is the center of a comprehensive network of public health services, and in partnership with local health departments, provides coordination and access to federal initiatives, training and certification, technical assistance and oversight, and specialty public health services that are not available at the local level.

DPH also regulates access to health care professions and provides regulatory oversight of health care facilities and services.

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ABOUT THE AUDIT

We have audited certain operations of the Department of Public Health in fulfillment of our duties under Section 2-90 of the Connecticut General Statutes. The scope of our audit included, but was not necessarily limited to, the fiscal years ended June 30, 2022 and 2023. The objectives of our audit were to evaluate the:

1. Department's internal controls over significant management and financial functions;
2. Department's compliance with policies and procedures internal to the department or promulgated by other state agencies, as well as certain legal provisions; and
3. Effectiveness, economy, and efficiency of certain management practices and operations, including certain financial transactions.

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

[Link to full report](#)

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Findings

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Repeat Findings

Our audit identified internal control deficiencies; instances of noncompliance with laws, regulations, or policies; and a need for improvement in practices and procedures that warrant management's attention.

NOTEWORTHY FINDINGS



Findings

1

The Department of Public Health (DPH) did not effectively monitor or enforce contractor compliance with its confidential and protected health information policy. As a result, the department was not aware that the contractor used unapproved communication methods. DPH did not detect this during the contract period.

We obtained and reviewed over one hundred voicemails. We found that the contractor forwarded them to its contact tracers' personal email accounts to communicate information about callers who were exposed to or tested positive for Covid-19. The voicemails revealed that the contractor used those personal email accounts to distribute the workflow to follow up with callers.

2

DPH did not update and maintain information in the Core-CT Asset Management module for several years. Additionally, the department failed to properly document asset disposals, locate missing assets, perform complete physical inventories, and capitalize certain expenditures. We also found weaknesses in software inventory.

3

We reviewed 37 Core-CT user accounts for employees separated from the agency during the audited period. DPH disabled 17 accounts between ten to 39 months after the employee's separation.

4

Our test of 25 contracts and contract amendments for full execution determined that six did not include the Office of the Attorney General's approval.

Our test of ten contracts for contract evaluations determined that the DPH Contracts and Grants Management Section could not find nine of the ten, and filed one evaluation 15 days late.

5

DPH could not provide 22 of 29 statutorily required reports or evidence of their submission or posting to its website.

6

DPH failed to provide support for overtime eligibility for ten exempt employees who earned 89 hours of overtime totaling \$5,323.



Recommendations

DPH should strengthen internal controls to effectively monitor contractor compliance with department policy to safeguard confidential and protected health information.

DPH should strengthen internal controls over the custody and reporting of assets to ensure compliance with the State Property Control Manual.

DPH should promptly terminate access to Core-CT upon an employee's separation.

DPH should implement effective monitoring procedures to ensure that contracts are approved by the Office of the Attorney General. The department should promptly perform contractor evaluations to assess the contractor's quality of work, reliability, and cooperation.

DPH should establish and implement an effective centralized system to track its statutory reporting requirements to ensure that it submits all required reports.

DPH should strengthen internal controls to ensure that it only pays overtime to eligible employees.