

PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Bastrop County Commissioner's Court Approves the Establishment of a Bastrop County Public Health Department

Bastrop County, Texas- On August 28th, 2023, the Bastrop County Commissioner's Court unanimously approved the establishment of a Bastrop County Public Health Department. Bastrop County Commissioner of Precinct 2, Clara Beckett read the resolution which noted its creation to become effective October 1, 2023.

This decision follows the recommendation from the *Bastrop County Public Health Improvement Project Final Report* written and delivered by: The Center for Community Health and Aging, Texas A&M School of Public Health and the Bastrop County Core Advisory Team consisting of Hannah Bartosh, MPH, Adam Bradley, MPH, James Burdine, DrPH, Jacob Stukenberg, MPH, Pompeyo Chavez, MD, Donna Nichols, MSEd, CHES and Linda Wilson, MD to the Bastrop County Commissioner's Court on June 12, 2023.

The Final Report noted a significant majority (95%) of the Bastrop County community leaders interviewed between July 2022 and March 2023, including input from City and County officials, Philanthropic Program Officers, Texas Local Health Departments and District Officials, all recommending a governmental public health agency be established

in Bastrop County. Furthermore, community leaders felt it was paramount for the Bastrop County Commissioner's Court to act quickly and judiciously, given a significant number of public health events and emergencies that have threatened the county in the past.

In addition, numerous findings of the report point to key themes such as communication both during disasters and blue-sky times, accountability and clarity of authority, collaboration between public health systems and organizations, and the need for a sustainable public health infrastructure. These issues could be drastically improved or even resolved with the creation of a central focus that a public health department could provide.

Commissioner Beckett concluded her motion by thanking the team for bringing these recommendations forward, saying that "Bastrop County will benefit greatly from your work. As a result, residents of Bastrop County will experience better health status as an outcome. With that understanding, the Commissioner's Court recognizes that establishing a Bastrop County Public Health Department is an important and critical public service needed by all."

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