

# Tennessee | John Dunn, DVM, PhD, EMBA-SL

## Interim Commissioner

Tennessee Department of Health

John R. Dunn, DVM, PhD, EMBA-SL Dr. John Dunn, a native of Nashville, Tennessee, attended Louisiana State University where he obtained a BS in Zoology in 1991. After completing his Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree from the Louisiana State University School of Veterinary Medicine, he spent three years in mixed animal veterinary practice in Zachary, Louisiana. Dr. Dunn completed a PhD in veterinary medical sciences (Epidemiology and Community Health) at Louisiana State University in 2003. During his doctoral studies, he conducted collaborative research with USDA-ARS focused on the pre-harvest epidemiology of Shiga-toxigenic *E. coli* in ruminants. He received an Executive Masters of Business Administration-Strategic Leadership from the Haslam School of Business at the University of Tennessee during 2022.



Dr. Dunn received a commission in the U.S. Public Health Service and joined the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in July 2003, where he worked in the Foodborne and Diarrheal Diseases Branch as an Epidemic Intelligence Service Officer. His responsibilities included responses to national and international requests involving foodborne and diarrheal disease surveillance, investigation of outbreaks, and consultation on botulism-related public health investigations.

In 2007, Dr. Dunn joined the Tennessee Department of Health, where he has held several key leadership roles over the past 18 years. He initially served as Director of Foodborne, Vectorborne, and Zoonotic Diseases, followed by his appointment as Deputy State Epidemiologist and State Public Health Veterinarian, guiding the state's surveillance and response strategies for communicable and zoonotic diseases. Throughout his tenure, Dr. Dunn has led cross-disciplinary efforts to strengthen public health infrastructure, emergency preparedness, and disease prevention initiatives across Tennessee. In 2019, Dr. Dunn was named State Epidemiologist directing the Communicable and Environmental Diseases and Emergency Preparedness division.

On July 11, 2025, Dr. Dunn was appointed Interim Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Health, where he provides executive leadership for one of the state's largest and most critical public service agencies. In this role, he oversees statewide public health operations, strategic planning, and coordination with local, state, and federal partners to protect, promote, and improve the health and well-being of all people in Tennessee.

Dr. Dunn has been active in the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE) and the National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians (NASPHV). In 2024, Dr. Dunn was elected to the American Epidemiological Society as a new member. His professional interests include infectious disease epidemiology, zoonoses, and pre-harvest food safety.