

Minnesota | Brooke Cunningham, MD, PhD

Health Commissioner

Minnesota Department of Health

Dr. Brooke Cunningham was appointed in January 2023 as commissioner for the Minnesota Department of Health. Dr. Cunningham is responsible for directing the work of the Minnesota Department of Health. MDH is the state's lead public health agency, responsible for protecting, maintaining, and improving the health of all Minnesotans. The department has approximately 1,400 employees in the Twin Cities area and seven offices in Greater Minnesota.

Prior to being appointed commissioner, Dr. Cunningham was appointed assistant commissioner for the Health Equity Bureau in 2022 by Commissioner Jan Malcolm. As assistant commissioner, Cunningham was responsible for overseeing the Center for Health Equity, the Office of American Indian Health, the COVID-19 Health Equity Team, and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. She also worked closely with leaders and staff in MDH's other bureaus to advance health equity in their work. Dr. Cunningham is a general internist, sociologist, and assistant professor in the Department of Family Medicine and Community Health at the University of Minnesota. Prior to joining MDH, her research focused on developing strategies to reduce racial disparities in health, including addressing the adverse impacts of exposure to racism. She also co-directed the University of Minnesota Medical School's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Thread in medical education. In 2021, she was selected as one of four inaugural recipients of the University of Minnesota's Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) Award. Cunningham is a primary care provider at the Community-University Health Care Clinic (CUHCC), a federally qualified health clinic in Minneapolis that serves a diverse patient population.



Cunningham received her doctorates in medicine and sociology from the University of Pennsylvania. After completing residency in internal medicine at Duke University, she completed fellowships in health services research, health policy, and bioethics at Johns Hopkins University and an AcademyHealth Delivery System Science Fellowship at the Medica Research Institute. She received her bachelor's degree in history and African American studies from the University of Virginia.