

Governor Greg Abbott Names Chair And Appoints Three To Statewide Health Coordinating Council

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Governor Greg Abbott has appointed Doris Jackson, D.H.A., Cheryl Sparks, Ed.D., and Bharath Thankavel, M.D. for terms set to expire on August 31, 2025. Additionally, the Governor named Elizabeth Protas, Ph.D. chair of the council. The council ensures health care services and facilities are available to all Texans through health planning activities. Based on these planning activities, the SHCC makes recommendations to the governor and the legislature through the Texas State Health Plan (TSHP). The council also provides overall guidance in the development of the TSHP, submission of the plan to the governor, and promoting the implementation of the plan.

Doris Jackson, D.H.A. of Pearland is a registered nurse and serves the campus president of Chamberlain University – Pearland. In addition, she is a board member on the Fort Bend County Black Nurses Association, and a member of the National Black Nurses Association, Society of Pediatric Nurses, Texas Nurses Association, American Nurses Association, Texas Community College Teachers Association, National Organization for Associate Degree Nursing, Texas Organization for Associate Degree Nursing, and the Wellness Ministry at Brentwood Baptist Church. Jackson received a Bachelor of Science in Nursing and a Master of Science in Nursing Leadership from Prairie View A&M University, and a Doctorate in Health Administration from Capella University.

Cheryl Sparks, Ed.D. of Big Spring is the president of the Howard County Junior College District. She is a member of the Texas Association of Community College and serves on the 60X30 Steering Committee. In addition, she has served on the Formula Advisory Committee for the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Council and is a member of the Scenic Mountain Medical Center Board, Permian Basin Workforce Development Board and the Big Spring Area Chamber of Commerce. Sparks received Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, a Master of Education, and a Doctor of Education from Texas Tech University.

Bharath Thankavel, M.D. of Dallas is a Medical Director at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Texas. He previously was the Medical Director of Home Care at Children's Health, while serving as an Assistant Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Texas Southwestern. He is a board member of the North Texas Commission, a delegate of the Dallas County Medical Society, and former member of Leadership Dallas. Thankavel received a Bachelor of Arts in Biology from Baylor University and a Doctor of Medicine from Saint George's University School of Medicine. He completed his residency in pediatrics at the University of South Florida School of Medicine.

Elizabeth Protas, Ph.D. of League City is the vice chair of the Universities Space Research Association Board of Trustees. She currently is a Fellow for the American Physical Therapy Association and the American College of Sports Medicine. Additionally, she is a board member for the United Way of Galveston and former member of the State Employee Charitable Council Advisory Committee. Protas received a Bachelor of Science in Physical Therapy and a Doctor of Philosophy in Education from State University of New York at Buffalo.