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Testimony to the Sunset Advisory Committee On behalf of the Department of State Health Services

My name is George Roberts, and I am pleased to be here today as a representative of the Northeast Texas Public Health District in Tyler, TX, as well as a member of the Texas Local Public Health Directors' Coalition. The Department of State Health Services is an extremely valuable partner for Local Health Departments in providing Public Health Services at the Local level. We work closely with DSHS in the areas of Public Health Emergency Preparedness, Disease Surveillance, Immunizations, TB Control, Environmental Health, Zoonosis, Laboratory Services, WIC, Chronic Disease efforts, Vital Statistics, and many other Population based services. Many Local Health Departments are also involved with providing Direct Patient Care services to many uninsured and underinsured Texans.

Issue #5 of the Sunset Committee's report to the Department of State Health Services offers recommendations for improving the roles and responsibilities and capacity of the DSHS Central Office, DSHS Health Service Regions and Local Health Departments. During the last 6 months, DSHS has initiated a Strategic Planning Process for Public Health in Texas. They will continue to work with the highly effective Public Health Funding and Policy Committee and with Local Health Departments with this effort.

Over the last few years, both DSHS and Local Public Health Directors have worked hard to improve our relationship with the ultimate goal of improving the health and well-being of Texans. I think that we work well together, and I certainly encourage the State to continue the valuable services and resources provided by the Texas Department of State Health Services.