

**Departure of Dr. Ernest L. Carter, Health Officer
Health Department**

**EXIT AUDIT
FEBRUARY 2024**

**OFFICE OF AUDITS AND INVESTIGATIONS
Prince George's County
Largo, Maryland**



THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Office of Audits and Investigations

February 2024

The County Council and County Executive
of Prince George's County, Maryland

Conforming to Article III, Section 313 of the Charter of Prince George's County, Maryland, we have performed a special audit of the accounts of the Office of Health Officer. This audit was initiated due to the resignation of Dr. Ernest L. Carter from the position of Health Officer of the Health Department, effective December 31, 2022.

Our examination included tests of the accounting records and other auditing procedures, as we considered necessary under the circumstances. Consideration was given to the fact that these records are included in the scope of the County's annual financial audit, conducted by CliftonLarsonAllen LLP, independent auditors, for the year ended June 30, 2022. Therefore, we primarily directed our examination to include a review of Dr. Carter's travel advances, expense reimbursements, leave records, fixed assets records, and selected expense accounts for the period July 1, 2022, through January 31, 2023.

This report, in our opinion, fulfills the requirements of Article III, Section 313 to perform a special audit of the accounts maintained by the departing official and their agency. We wish to express our sincere gratitude to the Administration for the cooperation and assistance extended to us during the course of this engagement.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Turkessa M. Green".

Turkessa M. Green, CPA, CIA, CISA
County Auditor

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jude Moise".

Jude Moise
Senior Auditor

FINDINGS, COMMENTS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Expenditures, Encumbrances, and Commitments

A statement of expenditures, encumbrances, and commitments compared with appropriations for the Office of the Health Officer, for the period July 1, 2022, through January 31, 2023, is presented on Schedule 1 of this report. As of January 31, 2023, total expenditures and encumbrances did not exceed total appropriations for the Office of the Health Officer.

Travel Advances and Expense Reimbursements

We reviewed the travel advance records maintained by the Office of Finance, Accounting Division, for the period July 1, 2022, through January 31, 2023, and determined that Dr. Carter did not have any unsettled travel advances at the time of his resignation. We also reviewed expense reimbursements paid to Dr. Carter for the period July 1, 2022, through January 31, 2023, and found no discrepancies or irregularities.

Leave Records and Final Pay

As the Health Officer for Prince George's County, Dr. Carter was a State employee and paid by the State of Maryland. In addition to his State salary, Dr. Carter was entitled to additional salary paid by the County through a Supplemental Pay Agreement. We verified that the supplemental pay payments made by the County were calculated correctly and the payments ended upon his resignation as Health Officer.

Fixed Assets and Non-Fixed Assets

The Capital Assets Manual, prepared by the Office of Finance and the Office of Central Services, requires the Office of Central Services' General Services Division to perform an exit inventory of capital (fixed) assets and report findings to the Director of the Office of Central Services, upon the departure or transfer of a Department/Agency Head. The Office of Central Services is required to take the necessary steps to recover any missing assets or seek restitution for the value of the assets. We contacted personnel within the Office of Central Services' General Services Division, Fleet Management Division, and the Health Department and determined that there were no County-owned fixed assets, including a County vehicle, assigned to Dr. Carter.

Our review also included the verification of County issued non-fixed asset items such as a cell phone, personal digital assistant, a County identification and security card, keys, a laptop computer/equipment, etc. This review included an examination of personnel records maintained by the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) and the Office of Finance's Payroll Section on separated employees. When an employee separates from County service, an Employee Separation Form (PGC Form #4281) is filled out by the employee as a part of the exit process. This form (PGC Form #4281) records the return of assigned County personal property and normally a copy can be found in the employee's personnel file. At the time of our review there was an Employee Separation Form in Dr. Carter's personnel file.

During our review of the Employee Separation Form (PGC Form #4281), we noted that the initial form provided by the Office of Human Resources Management did not indicate that County property was returned and was not signed by Dr. Carter, or the IT Coordinator since Dr. Carter had retained the property for use while he served as a consultant for the County, through December 2023.

A&I followed up with the Health Department on February 8, 2024, to determine if County property had been returned and noted that, while the Employee Separation Form provided by the HR Liaison indicated that County property was returned, the revised form was not signed by Dr. Carter or the IT Coordinator.

Upon further inquiry, A&I confirmed that on February 20, 2024, Dr. Carter had returned the County IT equipment assigned to him, which included a laptop, tablet, iPhone, monitor, MiFi device, and printer. An updated Employee Separation Form signed by the IT Coordinator was also provided to A&I on February 20, 2024, as confirmation that the equipment was returned.

- 1. We recommend that the Office of Human Resources Management implement procedures to ensure that Departmental HR Liaisons obtain completed, signed Employee Separation Forms for departing officials.**
- 2. We also recommend that the Health Department develop internal policies and procedures to ensure employees involved with the exit process adhere to Personnel Procedure 225 - Exit Interview Program.**

Financial Disclosure Requirement

Dr. Carter was not required to file a financial disclosure statement with the County under Section 2-294 (c) (1) of the Prince George's County Code. However, Subtitle 6 of the Maryland Public Ethics Law requires certain officials, employees, and designated individuals (among them the Health Officer) to file financial disclosure statements with the State. Section 5-604(a) further requires an individual who, other than by reason of death, leaves an office for which a statement is required, to file the statement within 60 days after leaving office.

Dr. Carter filed the proper financial disclosure statement with the Maryland State Ethics Commission for the period January 1, 2022 through December 31, 2022, as required.

Schedule 1

**HEALTH DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE HEALTH OFFICER
STATEMENT OF EXPENDITURES, ENCUMBRANCES, AND COMMITMENTS
COMPARED WITH APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE PERIOD
JULY 1, 2022 THROUGH JANUARY 31, 2023**

	Compensation	Fringe Benefits	Operating Expenses	Total
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<u>Appropriations</u>				
Current Year	\$2,967,400	\$1,130,000	\$5,569,400	\$9,666,800
 <u>Expenditures and Encumbrances</u>				
Salaries				
Full Time Regular	\$1,484,224			\$1,484,224
Overtime Compensation	86,242			86,242
Part Time Temporary Hours & Holiday Premium	27,966			27,966
Leave Payout	11,734			11,734
Beneflex Opt Out	907			907
State Health Merit System	62,532			62,532
State Health SPEC Payments	48,467			48,467
Compensation Journal Entry Adjustment	(80,275)			(80,275)
Fringe Benefits		507,595		507,595
Operating Expenses				
Telephone			371,503	371,503
Utilities - Electricity			152,831	152,831
Postage & Newspapers/Periodicals			30,507	30,507
Office Automation			4,808,303	4,808,303
Training and Travel Lodging			4,071	4,071
Mileage Reimbursement			765	765
Other General and Administrative Contract Svcs			12,363	12,363
General Office Supplies			518	518
Other Operating Supplies			168	168
IT Equipment Non-Capital			24,302	24,302
Office Equipment Rental/Lease			98,846	98,846
Building Rental/Lease			68,492	68,492
Total Expenditures & Encumbrances	\$1,641,795	\$507,595	\$5,572,667	\$7,722,058
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Unencumbered Balance as of January 31, 2023	\$1,325,605	\$622,405	\$(3,267)	\$1,944,742