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## **THE MISSISSIPPI PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION ANNOUNCES DR. LEI ZHANG AS PRESIDENT**

**OCTOBER 11, 2021**

The Mississippi Public Health Association (MPHA) is pleased to announce that Dr. Lei Zhang has taken office as President of the Association. Dr. Zhang was elected by the MPHA membership in 2019 and has been serving as President-Elect since that time. He formally took office as President at the MPHA Board of Directors Meeting on October 8, 2021.

Dr. Lei Zhang is professor and associate dean for research and scholarship in School of Nursing at the University of Mississippi Medical Center (UMMC). He also holds the secondary appointments as professor of data science in UMMC's John D. Bower School of Population Health and professor of Health Administration in School of Health Related Professions.

Prior to becoming an associate dean, Dr. Zhang served as director of Office of Health Data and Research at the Mississippi State Department of Health, where he oversaw surveillance, research and program evaluation for maternal and child health, chronic disease, oral health, tobacco control, and occupational health programs.

He is a certified public manager from the Mississippi State Personnel Board and a graduate from the State Executive Development Institute of Mississippi. He holds a PhD and an MS in biostatistics from the UMMC and an MBA from the University of Louisiana at Monroe.

Dr. Zhang has many recent accomplishments and honors, including:

- 2019 - 2021 President-Elect, Mississippi Public Health Association
- 2017-2019, Chair, Applied Public Health Statistics Section, American Public Health Association
- 2019 - 2021 Treasurer/ Past Chair, Applied Public Health Statistics Section, American Public Health Association
- 2018 Norman C. Nelson Order of Teaching Excellence Award, UMMC
- 2017 Alton B. Cobb Lifetime Achievement Award, Mississippi Public Health Association
- 2009 Statistics in Government Award, American Public Health Association

“ I am honored to be president of Mississippi Public Health Association. As president, I will work with all the MPHA members and the partners to promote public health through science and evidence in Mississippi. Our public health policy and practice should be data driven”, stated Dr. Zhang.

Dr. Zhang joins other current MPHA Board members, Dr. David Buys, Past-President; Lydia West, Secretary; Karin Thurman, Treasurer; Kathy Burk, MS Affiliate Representative to the APHA Governing Council; Jillian Harper-Peavey, Chair of the Council on Sections and Chapters; Dr. Sai Kurmana, Co-Chair of the Council on Sections and Chapters; Dr. Danielle Fastring, Dr. Nelson Atehortua De la Pena, and Caroline Newkirk as Members-at-Large.

Dr. Kaye Bender, Executive Director of the Mississippi Public Health Association, welcomed Dr. Zhang to the position, “I am so pleased to be working with Dr. Zhang in this position. He has a strong record of supporting MPHA and the science and evidence-base for public health interventions and practices. He will be a great leader for our state’s public health association”.

For questions and additional information, please contact Dr. Kaye Bender, [execdir@mspha.org](mailto:execdir@mspha.org); or Lydia West, Secretary and Chair of MPHA Communications Committee, [elle\\_west@yahoo.com](mailto:elle_west@yahoo.com).