

While Kate Schroder served as Finance Chair on the Cincinnati Board of Health, the Board made a controversial personnel change during the COVID-19 crisis that a spokesman for healthcare workers said could hurt the city's pandemic response and the morale of workers.

In April 2020, the Board of Health reassigned Health Commissioner Melba Moore from her position and promoted a less experienced employee to take the top post, again embroiling the Board in controversy and raising questions about the Board's management of the COVID-19 crisis:

- Schroder was Board of Health Finance chair in April 2020.

Members present: Kate Schroder, chair, Amar Bhati, Robert Brown, Dominic Hopson, Phil Lichtenstein, Melba Moore.

[\(City of Cincinnati Board of Health Finance Committee, 4/21/20\)](#)

- **The Board reassigned Health Commissioner Moore and promoted Assistant Health Commissioner Domonic Hopson, who was deemed “non-critical” just months before.** “Cincinnati Health Commissioner Melba Moore is no longer running the day-to-day operations of the city's health department. The change has raised concern among some health workers, union officials and at least one City Council member, who fear shuffling the leadership structure at the health department during a global pandemic might not be a good idea. Those behind the move say it frees Moore to oversee the daily response to the novel coronavirus pandemic, but others see a power grab that has stripped the commissioner of responsibility for a department that affects the health of the city's 302,000 residents. The Cincinnati Health Board reassigned Moore in April after Mayor John Cranley asked the board to relieve her of direct oversight responsibilities so she could focus on the city's response to the pandemic. The board then put day-to-day operations of the Cincinnati Health Department into the hands of Assistant Health Commissioner Domonic Hopson, who was given the new title of chief executive officer. Before Hopson's promotion, Moore had put him on a list of ‘non-critical’ department employees who could be furloughed for several months because of budget cuts.” (Sharon Coolidge and Dan Horn, Who's running Cincinnati's health department? Some fear a power struggle during pandemic,” [Cincinnati Enquirer](#), 5/18/20)
- **Medical workers said the “moves could hurt the city’s pandemic response and the morale of its health workers.”** “The changes at the health department angered Tom West, who leads the union that represents the city's nurses, AFSCME Local 1543. West fired off an email to several council members complaining the moves could hurt the city's pandemic response and the morale of its health workers. He also questioned why Hopson would seek a raise when the city and health department are facing drastic budget cuts and employee furloughs. ‘I do not understand why the Board is taking powers away from a very experienced minority female to give to a young male with limited experience, especially during this time of a pandemic,’ West wrote in the May 12 email, which was obtained by The Enquirer. Hopson is about 30 years younger than Moore, who is 64. ‘The worst part is that the person who is working with the board to take these powers is claiming he needs a raise,’ West wrote. ‘What type of person, who says that they are a leader, asks for a raise when the kingdom is crumbling?’” (Sharon Coolidge and Dan Horn, Who's running Cincinnati's health department? Some fear a power struggle during pandemic,” [Cincinnati Enquirer](#), 5/18/20)

Editor's Note: BOH Chair Phil Lichtenstein clarified the reassignment was discussed in [early April](#). There were not votes on personnel changes in April 2020 per Board Meeting [Minutes](#).