



**CABINET FOR HEALTH AND FAMILY SERVICES
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY**

Matthew G. Bevin
Governor

Division of Communications
275 E. Main Street, 4C-A
Frankfort, KY 40621
(502) 564-6786
Fax: (502) 564-0274
www.chfs.ky.gov

Vickie Yates Brown Glisson
Secretary

Statewide News Release

Media Contact: Beth Fisher, (502) 564-6786, ext. 3101;
Doug Hogan, ext. 3465

Health and Family Services Cabinet announces Two Top Appointments

FRANKFORT, Ky. (June 30, 2016) – Health and Family Services Cabinet Secretary Vickie Yates Brown Glisson today announced the appointment of two top officials in the agency. Dr. Hiram Polk, a prominent Louisville surgeon, has been appointed commissioner of the Department for Public Health and Robert S. Silverthorn, Jr., an attorney and retired U.S. Army Major General, has been appointed Inspector General.

“I am pleased to announce the appointments of these two highly qualified individuals and look forward to them being a part of our leadership team,” said Sec. Glisson. “Both bring a wealth of knowledge and expertise to their positions that will be invaluable in providing oversight and leadership as we carry out the important mission of the Cabinet for Health and Family Services.”

A renowned surgeon, Dr. Polk is a native of Jackson, Mississippi, graduate of Harvard Medical School and served as the Ben A. Reid Professor and Chairman of Surgery at the University of Louisville from 1971 to 2005. He received his surgical training at Washington University in St. Louis and was a fellow at the Lister Institute of Preventive Medicine in London as well as the Pasteur Institute in Paris, France.

While Chairman at Louisville, Polk trained more than 330 surgical residents, all of whom hold board certification in general surgery. Many of the surgical residents have become academic surgery chairmen at medical schools in the United States.

Dr. Polk also serves as a Steward of The Jockey Club and is a director of the Grayson Research Foundation and the Biomedical Research Foundation in Washington, D.C.

“Many health issues plague the Commonwealth, from chronic diseases such as heart disease and diabetes, to the serious substance abuse and addiction crisis, especially in pregnant women. Meanwhile, we must be vigilant and prepared to respond to emerging public health issues such as the Zika virus or a potential Hepatitis C outbreak from intravenous drug use,” said Dr. Polk. “I am excited to take on the role of public health commissioner because it gives me an opportunity to direct policy and implement pilot programs to address these very serious issues.”

A native of Oklahoma City, OK, General Silverthorn is a graduate of Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania and the University of Louisville Brandeis Law School. In addition to his successful military career, which included service in Vietnam, he has been engaged in the private practice of law, representing



clients in complex litigation, in both state and federal court, and served as the Chair of the Kentucky Bar Association Civil Litigation Committee. He has served on the boards of a number of local and national nonprofit organizations, and has considerable experience in the leadership of large and diverse organizations. He resides in Louisville with his family.

“I greatly appreciate the opportunity to serve in this administration and help address the many issues and responsibilities that come before the Office of Inspector General,” said General Silverthorn. “OIG plays a vital role in protecting the health, safety and welfare of the citizens of the Commonwealth and I am pleased to join the team and start contributing to their very important work.”

Dr. Polk and Silverthorn will join the CHFS staff Friday, July 1.

-30-

The Cabinet for Health and Family Services is home to most of the state's human services and healthcare programs, including the Department for Medicaid Services, the Department for Community Based Services the Department for Public Health and the Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities. CHFS is one of the largest agencies in state government, with nearly 8,000 full- and part-time employees located across the Commonwealth focused on improving the lives and health of Kentuckians.