March 29, 1883

*This Date in Missouri Senate History*

On *This Date in Missouri Senate History*, the date was March 29, 1883, the day the Missouri General Assembly created the State Board of Health.

The move came as a response to severe outbreaks of cholera, typhoid and smallpox in Missouri. This led to a group of doctors asking the Legislature to step, which they did.

The agency’s success was determined by a growing Missouri population, in the years that followed, along with longer life expectancy.

The original board was made up of seven members, who were chosen by the governor and served four-year terms. The board:

* Granted state licenses to practice medicine;
* Studied the cause and prevention of disease;
* Enforced rules and regulations to prevent the spread of infectious diseases;
* Operated the Bureau of Vital Statistics;
* Appointed a state health commissioner; and
* Removed from office any county health officer who neglected or failed to perform his duties.

Several changes have been made to the original board over the years. These include name changes that have happened over the years, but the mission remains the same now — for the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services — as it did for the State Board of Health, created on March 29, 1883, on *This Date in Missouri Senate History*.

(Sources: [Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services](http://health.mo.gov/about/) and *Missouri Senate Journal*)