



Biographical Note

**Emily Johnson Piper**

Minnesota Department of Human Services  
Commissioner

Emily Johnson Piper is commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Human Services. DHS is the state's largest agency, serving well over 1 million people with an annual budget of \$18 billion and more than 6,223 employees throughout the state. The department administers a broad range of services, including health care, economic assistance, mental health and substance abuse prevention and treatment, child welfare services, and services for the elderly and people with disabilities. DHS also provides direct care and treatment to more than 10,000 clients every year.

Prior to joining DHS, Piper served as general counsel and deputy chief of staff in the Office of Governor Mark Dayton and Lt. Gov. Tina Smith. In this role, Piper represented and advised the governor, lieutenant governor, cabinet and state agencies on legal matters involving the state of Minnesota. As general counsel to the governor and lieutenant governor, Piper worked closely with DHS on many of the agency's most high-profile legal matters and policy initiatives. Piper also served as chair of the State Board of Investment Proxy Committee and the State Board of Investment Administrative Committee. The State Board of Investment manages approximately \$76 billion of state pension and other assets.

Prior to joining the Office of the Governor and Lt. Governor, Piper served as deputy commissioner and chief of staff for the Minnesota Department of Commerce. In this role, Piper oversaw the department's staff, its divisions and its biennial budget. While at the Commerce Department, Piper worked with agency leadership in regulating, among others, Minnesota's insurance, real estate, banking and energy industries. In addition to this work, during her tenure as chief of staff, Piper was charged with leading several strategic reform and legislative initiatives for the department, including implementation of health reform, organizational realignment to better serve consumer needs and Minnesota's response to the state's 2014 propane shortage. Prior to serving as deputy commissioner and chief of staff, Piper served as general counsel for the department.

Piper began her career as an attorney with McGrann Shea Carnival Straughn & Lamb Chartered in Minneapolis, working on civil litigation including health care and insurance law. Piper earned a bachelor's degree in biology from the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, and her juris doctor degree from University of St. Thomas School of Law. Piper lives in Golden Valley with her husband and four children. In her spare time, Piper has served on several community boards and commissions. She is also a Girl Scout Troop leader and a second grade girls basketball coach.