

# Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Bernard Turnock  
Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library  
*Illinois Statecraft – Jim Thompson* Oral History project

Interview # IST-A-L-2014-013

Bernard Turnock, public health director under Gov. Jim Thompson, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Illinois Statecraft – Jim Thompson* Oral History project.

Interview date & location:

Dates: April 8, 16 & 22, 2014.

Location: Room 673, UIC School of Public Health, Chicago, IL

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Mike Czaplicki, ALPL project historian

Transcription by: Audio Transcription Center, Boston, MA

Edited by: Mike Czaplicki, ALPL project historian

Total Pages: 114 pgs Total Time: 1:40 + 2:52 + 2:08 / 1.67 + 2.87 + 2.13 = 6.67 hrs

Session 1: Turnock's Background and Initial Service in State Government

Session 2: Public Health in Chicago and Turnock's Return to State Government

Session 3: The Thompson Administration's Response to the AIDS Crisis

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on July 22, 2014.

The interviews are archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in  
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# Abstract

## Bernard Turnock, *Illinois Statecraft*, IST-A-L-2014-013

**Biographical Information Overview of Interview:** Dr. Bernard (Barney) Turnock was born in Cleveland, Ohio, on July 26, 1947. His father worked in computer sales for IBM, and Barney grew up in Endicott, New York, and South Bend, Indiana. After graduating high school in 1965, Barney attended Boston College, where he majored in biology. He moved back to the Midwest for medical school, earning his MD from the University of Illinois in 1973, the same year he married Colleen Hogan. He completed his formal education in 1976 at Berkeley's Master of Public Health program.

In 1977, following a fellowship with the New York City Health Department, Barney was recruited to the Illinois Department of Public Health (DPH) by Dr. Paul Peterson. During this initial stint as a member of the Thompson administration, Barney oversaw the development of a statewide network of trauma centers and directed efforts to improve maternal and child-health programs. A combination of personal and professional considerations led him to accept a position as the deputy commissioner of the Chicago Department of Health in 1982.

Almost immediately, Turnock faced a unique and terrifying crisis when seven Chicago-area residents died after taking cyanide-laced Tylenol capsules. He oversaw the department's role in the multi-agency investigation of these murders. The following year he served as acting commissioner of health during Mayor Harold Washington's transition, before returning to deputy commissioner after Washington appointed Dr. Lonnie Edwards commissioner. In 1985, Barney returned to Illinois state government as the director of DPH after criticism of the department's response to the largest Salmonella outbreak in Illinois history led Governor Thompson to fire Thomas Kirkpatrick as director.

These interviews begin with Turnock outlining his upbringing and education, before shifting to his career in public health. He discusses his initial work at DPH; his years in Chicago, including the Tylenol investigation, the impact of the early 1980s recession, public health under mayors Jane Byrne and Harold Washington, and the emergence of the HIV-AIDS crisis; the 1985 Salmonella outbreak; the relationships between DPH and other state agencies; his assessment of Thompson and key staff; state initiatives in maternal and child health; the state's response to HIV-AIDS; and abortion politics, particularly around the *Ragsdale v. Turnock* case. He also reflects more generally on patronage, the field of public health, the politics of public health budgeting, and the relationship between public health regulation and democracy.

**Subject Headings/Key Words:** Public Health, Illinois Department of; Public Health, Chicago Department of; James R. Thompson; Salmonella outbreak of 1985; AIDS politics in Illinois; Tylenol scare of 1982; Harold Washington; Abortion politics in Illinois; EMS in Illinois; maternal and child health in Illinois; budgeting in Illinois; Jane Byrne; American Airlines Flight 191 crash

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