



Minnesota Public Health Association

Public Health System in Minnesota

Background:

In Minnesota, public health responsibilities are shared between state and local governments. Community Health Boards and their local health departments are critical partners to the Minnesota Department of Health efforts to protect and improve health. Responsibilities of state and local health departments have expanded in response to current public health issues and challenges. For example: developing effective statewide emergency plans, grappling with problems of methamphetamine, and creating approaches to reduce childhood obesity. Flexible funding has been inadequate to meet growing public health needs.

Facts:

- Although many local public health departments have received federal funding for emergency preparedness activities, this funding is inadequate. Over half of local public health agencies in Minnesota receive less than \$25,000/year to cover all emergency preparedness planning requirements.
- Local public health agencies have less control over how they can use their funding. Over the past 25 years, the percentage of flexible funding decreased from 52% to 36%.
- Recent budget cuts have resulted in increased competition for all sources of funds---federal, state, and local as well as fees and reimbursements. Some of the programs most significantly impacted include: suicide prevention activities, tobacco prevention programs, adolescent health programs, family home visiting, family planning, health promotion activities, and home health care.
- The Governor has recommended critical public funding investments to strengthen the capacity of the state and local public health system in pandemic influenza preparedness, e-health priorities (public health information system), and surveillance of communicable and chronic diseases.

MPHA Recommendation:

- Provide funding to state and local public health departments to support essential public health activities that address current and emerging public health needs.
- Promote public health initiatives that use evidence-based strategies to improve the health and safety of Minnesota residents and measure outcomes.
- Encourage increases in the proportion of flexible funding to allow local public health departments to continue providing effective programs that address local health needs.

These data facts are available in reports and information sheets at:

1. Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), Office of Public Health Practice website: www.health.state.mn.us/divs/cfh/ophp
2. MDH, *Building a Solid Foundation for Health: A Report on Public Health System Development*, February 2007.
3. MDH, *State Community Health Advisory Committee, Report of Accountability Review Process Workgroup*, January 2007.
4. MDH, *Essential Local Public Health Activities Framework*, August 11, 2005.

This brief is also available online at www.mpha.net. For more information contact: Donna Anderson (annodan@att.net) or Lindsey Fabian (Fabian@epi.umn.edu), MPHA Policy and Advocacy Team co-chairs.