



# WHAT DOES PUBLIC HEALTH DO FOR MY COMMUNITY?

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## PREVENT

**Public health departments help prevent the start and spread of outbreaks and disease.** They:

- **Keep food and physical environments safe.** Restaurant food we eat, hotels we visit and daycares where our children play are all safer thanks to public health departments. They also minimize health hazards such as lead poisoning and water pollution.
- **Help prevent the occurrence and spread of disease.** Public health departments assess and monitor disease in their community. They work with state, healthcare and community partners to prevent and target the cause of disease, and then determine the appropriate response.
- **Prepare for and respond to disasters and emergencies.** Public health departments work with the emergency management and other local officials to plan for and respond to natural disasters, new disease outbreaks, and bioterrorism threats that can dramatically impact health.

## PROMOTE

**Public health departments promote healthy communities.** They champion proven practices to foster better health for everyone. They know prevention works and cuts health care costs. They:

- **Promote better health throughout the lifespan.** They help people stay well. They offer education and services to help reduce infectious disease like the flu and chronic illness like heart disease. A healthy community leads to a more productive workforce, reduced healthcare costs, and a better quality of life.
- **Assure access to quality health care services.** They evaluate and augment the health service capacity of the community, including: screenings for blood pressure, diabetes and cholesterol, immunizations for all ages, and dental care for children.

## PROTECT

**Public health departments protect community health and economic vitality through public health policy and community partnerships.** They:

- **Uphold policies known to improve our community's health.** Better foods in our schools, more physical activity, "healthy homes," and smoke-free places are examples of policies that have a major impact on the health of our children and neighbors. A healthy community has greater potential for positive economic growth.
- **Continuously assess needs and improve capacity to promote better health.** Whether assessing community health, implementing quality improvement efforts, or pursuing accreditation, public health departments maximize opportunities to improve public health practice and the public's health.