



WHAT PUBLIC HEALTH DOES

What does Public Health do?

Public health activities lay the groundwork for healthy communities. They protect us from diseases and injury and help us change behaviors that could cause us harm. Public health activities keep us *out* of doctors' offices.

Prevents Epidemics

DPH ensures a healthy state community by preventing epidemics. It locates and treats the contacts of persons possibly exposed to tuberculosis and other communicable diseases, limits the spread of food-borne outbreaks, and provides vaccine to children and adults, including children without insurance.

Protects the Environment, Workplace, Housing, Food and Water

Delaware's Division of Public Health (DPH) assures the safety of food and water through inspection, education and regulation. We help to assure lead-safe housing and we work with other agencies to assess the health impact of hazardous substances in the environment.

Promotes Healthy Behavior

Public health programs encourage people to behave in healthy ways. The setting may be a community meeting, health fair, sexually transmitted disease clinic or school-based health center -- and the message may be as diverse as avoiding teen pregnancy, improving indoor air or adopting a healthy diet.

Monitors the Health of the Population

DPH maintains a constant vigil over the health of our state. We monitor disease trends statewide and watch for potential new health problems. DPH maintains health statistics on communicable diseases, cancer, births, deaths, risk factors and many other health events. We survey Delawareans to understand their health behaviors, such as getting cancer screenings and exercising. We identify important issues such as disparities in the rates of cancer, diabetes and other diseases and issues, such as infant mortality.

Mobilizes Communities for Action

DPH helps communities organize around health issues. Examples include our role on the Delaware IMPACT Tobacco Coalition, the Delaware Cancer Consortium, the Delaware Healthy Mothers and Infants Consortium, and the Delaware Diabetes Coalition. *Healthy Delaware 2010* rallied communities to improve health.

Responds to Disasters

DPH plans public health emergency services, such as staffing shelters or assisting with evacuations during storms. DPH takes the state's lead role in detecting and responding to bioterrorism.

Assures that Medical Services are High Quality and Accessible

DPH runs three long-term care facilities and a public health laboratory. DPH also regulates x-ray equipment, inspects non-institutional health care facilities, and coordinates statewide emergency medical services.

Trains Specialists in Investigating and Preventing Diseases

DPH trains others to prevent disease through satellite conferences on new vaccines, statewide conferences on sexually transmitted diseases, training on the latest techniques for health education and certifying paramedics.

Develops Policies to Promote Health

Public health is promoted through policies such as controlling environmental tobacco smoke, regulating safe food preparation, and setting standards for screening newborns for inherited metabolic diseases.

For More Information

To contact DPH about ways you can help your community become healthier, contact DPH's Office of Health and Risk Communication at (302) 744-4704 weekdays between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

24/7 Emergency Contact Number: 1-888-295-5156

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