

Prevent. Promote. Protect.



Local Public Health in Minnesota



Public Health
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What Is Public Health?

Public health is the art, practice and science of **protecting and improving** the health of the population. Public health is about **what makes us healthy**, what makes us sick, and what we can do **together** about it. When we think about health, what often comes to mind is the individual and ways he or she can stay healthy. Public health shifts the focus to the **population** – from me to **all of us**.



Principles of Public Health

- Public health is about **PREVENTION**. This means intervening early and keeping people from getting sick or injured.
- Public health is about **POPULATIONS**. This means focusing on groups of people rather than single individuals.
- Public health is about **HEALTH**. This means the broadest possible view of what makes and keeps us healthy including our mental health, everyday health choices, and our surroundings – not just health care services.
- Public health is about **LOCAL NEEDS**. This means identifying what a community needs to improve health and assuring effective action which uses local assets to solve unique challenges.

The Value of Local Health Departments

- Local public health departments are an investment in healthy people and healthy communities.
- You may not always see the work of local public health departments, but you are safer and healthier because of it.
- Local public health departments create health and prevent illness where we live, learn, work and play.
- Local public health departments are on the front lines addressing community challenges and opportunities.

Minnesota's local public health system, also known as the Community Health Services (CHS) system, is designed to ensure that the public's health and safety are protected while providing flexibility for local governments to identify and address local needs. The CHS system consists of 50 community health boards – the legally recognized governing bodies for local public health in Minnesota – that work in tandem with the Minnesota Department of Health to fulfill essential local public health responsibilities under Minnesota Statute 145A.

For more information, please contact:

Lorna Schmidt, Director, Local Public Health Association of Minnesota
651-789-4354 or lschmidt@mncounties.org

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