



The State of Public Health In Washington

Years of cuts to vital public health programs and agencies on both the federal and state levels have taken their toll and further complicate our efforts to support ongoing disease and injury prevention activities and to ensure we are prepared for an infectious disease outbreak, or other public health emergency. The current Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations Bill, which funds most federal public health programs, contains increased funding levels for many of these programs for the first time in recent years.

- Washington spent \$81 per capita on public health programs in 2006, which is half of the national average of \$162 per capita.
- In the past year the rate of uninsured people in Washington has increased by 6% to 13.8% in 2006.
- Washington has one of the lowest rates of immunization coverage with only 77.8% of children immunized in 2006, compared with the national average of 80.9%.
- Washington ranked 18th in the U.S. in lowest prevalence of adult obesity, with 23.3 percent of adult residents obese in 2006. While this is an improvement in rank, it is still an increase from 2005 when the percentage was 22.1.

Sources: America's Health Rankings, 2006 Edition: A Call to Action for People & Their Communities; Trust for America's Health The State of Your Health Report, 2006 Edition; The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation State Health Facts.

In response to an informal electronic survey sent out to our membership and 53 state affiliates:

A faculty member at the University of Washington told us, "we have written numerous grants for CDC funded research projects that received very high marks. We were told every time that these were very fundable projects for which there was little to no funding to support them. It has also been difficult to keep faculty and staff in our school as both state and federal funding cuts have been so severe."

A Public Health Worker at the Washington State Department of Health responded that, "these cuts will mean that nationally, and in [Washington], fewer women, infants, and children will be able to receive WIC Program services."

Founded in 1872, APHA is the oldest, largest and most diverse organization of public health professionals in the world. The association aims to protect all Americans and their communities from preventable, serious health threats and strives to assure community-based health promotion and disease prevention activities and preventive health services are universally accessible in the United States. www.apha.org.