



## *The State of Public Health In Maryland*

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.

- Maryland spent \$189 per capita on public health programs in 2005 and 2006.
- After the percentage of uninsured was decreased from 14.6% of the population in 2005 to 14.2% of the population in 2006, Maryland now has a lower-than-average rate of uninsured nationally.
- Maryland's immunization coverage of children between the ages of 19 and 35 months has improved substantially, from 80% in 2005 to 82.3% in 2006, and it is now ranked 24<sup>th</sup> nationally.
- Maryland ranked 25<sup>th</sup> in the U.S. in the rate of adult obesity: with 24.4 percent of adult residents obese, this percentage is up from 23.9% in 2005.

*Sources: America's Health Rankings, 2006 Edition: A Call to Action for People & Their Communities; 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 Public Health Worker in Maryland's Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, working in Baltimore told us ***"as a result of five full time staff cuts, in response to the budget, morale and program size are both at an all time low."*** In response to a follow up question about how cuts affected relationships with the community: ***"Credibility often follows dollars, and when there is none to share, partnerships are difficult at best and fall apart at worst."***

A professor at Allegany College of Maryland responded that she was ***"6 months into a 3-year grant program to develop interactive curriculum for community colleges, and was informed that all current and future funds were pulled."***

*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](http://www.apha.org).*