



American
Public Health
Association



APHA PHACT Campaign

PUBLIC HEALTH ACTION CAMPAIGN



The State of Public Health in Texas

Budget cuts to vital public health agencies and programs at both the federal and state levels have taken their toll on Texas and the nation as a whole, complicating public health efforts. Additional resources are needed to adequately support improving access to care, controlling diseases, eliminating health disparities, and other public health activities. Make public health a priority this year and help us move towards developing a healthy society.

The Facts:

- **Public Health Funding:** The state of Texas spends an average of \$18.61 a year to meet the public health needs of each resident, placing Texas 37th in the nation. The state receives an additional \$21.13 per person in funding from the CDC (26th in the nation) and \$17.66 per person from HRSA (35th in the nation). The Prevention and Public Health Fund, created by the Affordable Care Act, has also awarded \$17.63 million in grants to Texas in FY 2010 for prevention programs, training of the primary care workforce, and improvements to public health infrastructure.
- **Access to Care:** About 26 percent of Texas residents lack health insurance, compared to 17 percent nationally. This is by far the highest percentage of uninsured individuals in the country. Additionally, only 59.7 percent of pregnant women receive prenatal care in their first trimester, the lowest level in the country, and over 25 percent of children under age 18 live in poverty, the 7th highest level in the US.
- **Health Indicators:** While Texas has a relatively low rate of cancer deaths (183.7 deaths per 100,000 people, the 11th lowest rate in the country), it also has the 6th highest incidence of infectious disease (20.4 cases per 100,000 people). The state also has the 5th highest percentage of adults with high cholesterol (40.8 percent).
- **The Road Ahead:** Texas has made many recent public health improvements, such as decreasing the prevalence of smoking from 30.6 percent of the population to 17.9 percent since 1990. However, the state continues to face many public health challenges, including an increasing obesity rate (29.5 percent of the population, the 16th highest rate in the country).

Sources: Trust for America's Health State Data; Healthcare.gov, "The Affordable Care Act's Prevention and Public Health Fund in Your State;" Kaiser Family Foundation's statehealthfacts.org; United Health Foundation's America's Health Rankings.

In response to an informal electronic survey sent out to our membership and 53 state affiliates in 2008:

A Public Health Worker in the Tarrant County Public Health Department, working in Fort Worth, told us, "*funding for our new grant year is about \$50,000 less than the year before...This has meant that our program has substantially less funding to work with in the new year and programs we would like to pursue cannot be part of our plans.*"

A Public Health Worker at the Texas State Department of Social and Health Services responded, "*What is happening with our public health funding is tragic...we have regressed about 10-15 years under the current administration.*"

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.