



The State of Public Health In Virginia

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.

- Virginia spent \$97 per capita on public health programs in 2006, significantly lower than the national average of \$162 per capita.
- In the past year, the rate of uninsured population decreased from 14.4% in 2005 to 13.6% for 2006.
- Virginia has a relatively high rate of infant mortality, with 7.2 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2006, ranking them 22nd in the U.S.
- Virginia ranked 28th in the U.S. in lowest prevalence of adult obesity, with 25.1% of adult residents obese in 2006; this percentage is well over double the rate of 9.9% in 1990.

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 Public Health Worker in Virginia's Department of Health in Richmond told us that as a result of funding cuts, *"we have to cut grants that went to community based organizations for outreach to minority and vulnerable populations."*

An employee at Health Promotion for People with Disabilities responded: *"With so many Americans suffering from chronic and disabling conditions, it is very short-sighted of the current administration to cut important health promotion and prevention programs that could only help the status of health in America. For every one person who is prevented from developing a chronic disease because of health promotion activities, thousands of dollars are saved in the healthcare system."*

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.