



The State of Public Health In Texas

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.

- Texas spent \$179 per capita on public health programs in 2006, the same amount that was spent in 2005.
- Texas has the highest rate of uninsured people in the nation, with 24.2% of residents lacking health insurance in 2006.
- Texas's prevalence of children in poverty is one of the highest in the nation, with 22% of residents under age 18 in poverty in 2006.
- Since 1990, the rate of obesity in Texas has increased 120% with 27% of the population clinically obese in 2006.

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 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.