



The State of Public Health In Montana

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.

- Montana was ranked 5th in the U.S. for per capita spending on public health programs, having spent \$293 per capita in 2006.
- In 2006 Montana was ranked 4th in the U.S. for deaths due to infectious disease, one of the lowest rankings in the country.
- Montana's rate of uninsured decreased from 19.1% in 2005 to 17.4% in 2006, now ranking 36th in the U.S.
- Since 1990, the prevalence of obesity in Montana has increased by 145%.

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 Montana's Butte Silver Bow Health Department wrote, "*All preventative health programs have decreased in funding to levels forcing us to decrease or eliminate services all together.*"

In response to a question about how cuts have affected community outreach and relationships:

"Community organizations have come to depend on our assistance. With each year we have had to decrease services due to decreased funding and personnel."

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.