



American
Public Health
Association



APHA PHACT Campaign

PUBLIC HEALTH ACTION CAMPAIGN



The State of Public Health in Alabama

Years of flat funding and budget cuts to vital public health agencies and programs at both the federal and state levels have taken their toll on Alabama 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 Alabama spends an average of \$51.82 a year on the public health needs of each resident, the 12th highest level in the nation. Total public health spending in Alabama, including federal sources such as money from CDC and HRSA, amounts to an average of \$159 per person, the 20th highest level in the nation.
- **Health Disparities:** Alabama has significant disparities between the health care received by whites and the health care received by racial and ethnic minorities. For example, African Americans with cancer are 22 percent more likely to die than whites. Still, individuals of all races face challenges in accessing health care and 15.2 percent of Alabamans are uninsured.
- **Chronic Disease:** About 30 percent of adults are obese, the 3rd highest rate in the nation. Alabamans also are ranked 3rd in the nation in hypertension (32 percent of adults) and 5th in the nation in diabetes (9.3 percent of adults). Over 29 percent of adult Alabamans are classified as physically inactive, the 5th highest rate in the nation.
- **The Road Ahead:** Although Alabama has made recent improvements in many public health areas, such as reducing violent crime and lowering the number of children living in poverty, the state continues to face many public health challenges.

Sources: *United Health Foundation's State Snapshots; Trust for America's Health, The State of Your Health Report, 2008 Edition.*

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

A Public Health Researcher from Birmingham, Alabama explained, *"If CDC's budget is cut it will impact their ability to do their job and provide the necessary oversight."*

A Local Public Health Worker told us: *"Bioterrorism funding and HRSA grants were supposed to build infrastructure for public health. They have sapped the core functions and imposed additional duties on all staff in all programs. The public health nursing shortage is desperate."*

Another Public Health Worker described: *"Additional cuts may cause us to continue to reduce the number of clients served even though the need exceeds current funding levels. Additionally, I anticipate having to reduce at least one or two positions hours to part-time. As the number of uninsured continues to grow, services are being reduced. The disparity continues to grow. More funds need to be placed toward preventative health care not less."*

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.