



## *The State of Public Health In Georgia*

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.

- Georgia spent \$138 per capita on public health programs in 2006, but public health spending in Georgia is below the national average, ranking 28th.
- The percent of the population lacking health insurance increased from 17.4% in 2005 to 18.9% in 2006; now Georgia has one of the worst rates of uninsured nationally, ranking 45<sup>th</sup> in 2006.
- Immunization coverage for children remained at 84.7% in 2005 and 2006, placing Georgia above the national average with a rank of 10<sup>th</sup> in the nation in 2006.
- The prevalence of obesity in Georgia has more than doubled since 1990 and is one of the highest in the nation, ranking 37<sup>th</sup> in 2006.

Sources: *America's Health Rankings, 2006 Edition: A Call to Action for People & Their Communities*; *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 from Atlanta, Georgia told us: "We are one of the organizations in the state funded by the CDC to develop and run a population-based lupus registry. Funding was cut for the first time in the middle of our project. If this remains, not only will we not achieve our goals, but the first three years of funding would have been a complete waste of tax-payer funds."*

*Another Public Health Worker at a county health department 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 from full- to part-time. As the under and uninsured continue to grow, services are being reduced. The disparity between the insured and under/uninsured continues to grow. More funds need to be placed toward preventative health care."*

*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](http://www.apha.org).*