



American  
Public Health  
Association



# APHA PHACT Campaign

## PUBLIC HEALTH ACTION CAMPAIGN



## *The State of Public Health in Alaska*

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 Alaska 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 Alaska spends an average of \$45.06 a year on the public health needs of each resident, the 16<sup>th</sup> highest level in the nation. Total public health spending in Alaska, including federal sources such as money from HRSA and CDC, amounts to an average of \$482 per person, the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest level in the nation.
- **Chronic Disease:** Alaska has among the lowest rates in the nation of cancer (2,650 cases in 2008), diabetes (4.8 percent of adults) and hypertension (21.4 percent of adults).
- **Access to Care:** Yet, Alaska faces health challenges as well: 16.5 percent of Alaskans do not have health insurance and only 73.5 percent of children ages 19 to 35 months receive complete immunizations.
- **Health Disparities:** Racial and ethnic minorities (excluding African Americans) experience 73 percent more premature death than whites and 56 percent more than African Americans.
- **The Road Ahead:** Although Alaska has made some recent improvements to public health, including reducing the percentage of smokers in the state from 34.3 percent to 24 percent since 1990, the state still faces 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 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. I think the situation is worse than dire."*

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