



The State of Public Health In Rhode Island

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.

- Rhode Island spent \$168 per capita on public health programs in 2006, the same as in 2005. This number is up from \$159 per capita spent in 2004.
- The rate of uninsured people in Rhode Island continues to increase, moving up from 11.4% in 2005 to 11.8% in 2006.
- Since 1990, the percentage of children in poverty increased by 55 percent, from 11.7% to 18.1% in 2006.
- Rhode Island ranked 6th in the U.S. for lowest prevalence of adult obesity, with 21% of adult residents clinically obese.

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 told us *"What is happening with public health funding is tragic. We have regressed about 10-15 years under the current administration."*

An employee at Health Promotion for People with Disabilities reported: *"With so many Americans suffering from chronic and disabling conditions, it is very short-sighted of the current administration to cut important health promotion and prevention programs that could only help the status of health in America. For every one person who is prevented from developing a chronic disease because of health promotion activities, thousands of dollars are saved in the healthcare system."*

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.