



The State of Public Health In Kansas

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.

- Kansas spent \$95 per capita on public health programs in 2005 and 2006; however, funding for public health in Kansas remains below the national average, ranking 34th.
- The percent of the population without health insurance decreased 11.1% in 2005 to below 2004 levels at 10.8% in 2006; the rate of uninsured in Kansas is above the national average, ranking 8th.
- Immunization coverage for children increased from 77.5% 2005 to 83.8% in 2006, propelling its ranking from 43rd in the nation to 16th.
- Between 2005 and 2006, the prevalence of obesity increased from 23.1% to 23.9%, while the percentage of the population that smokes decreased from 19.8% to 17.8% over the same period.

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 the University of Kansas Medical Center in Kansas City, Kansas told us, ***"Losing the federal finding will result in the loss of staff and ultimately the loss of certification of poison control center. In addition, staffing may decrease to less than fulltime coverage."*** In response to a follow-up question about the effect of funding cuts on the community, she responded, ***"Decrease in staffing and certification will be inevitable, which may result in less availability to the public. Loss of certification will decrease our ability to work with other agencies as we may be viewed as less credible."***

Another Public Health Worker described, ***"As a result of budget cuts, we were forced to cut our outreach activities that were aimed at wellness, obesity, and diabetes education. We expect to see patients going to the ER for care and long term complications."***

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.