



## *The State of Public Health In Colorado*

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.

- Colorado spent \$92 per capita on public health programs in 2006, an increase from \$86 in 2004. Public health spending in Colorado is still one of the lowest in the US, ranking 42<sup>nd</sup> in 2006
- The percent of the population lacking health insurance has leveled at 17.0% since 2005, but the rate of the uninsured is currently below the national average, ranking 38<sup>th</sup> in 2005.
- Immunization coverage for children increased from 67.5% in 2004 (the lowest in the country) to 83.4% in 2006. As a result of this effort, Colorado now ranks 16<sup>th</sup> in the nation.
- The prevalence of obesity in Colorado increased from 6.9% in 1990 to 17.1% in 2006; while this is the lowest rate in the nation, this high of a percentage still poses a public health threat.

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 State Public Health Worker from Denver, Colorado told us that her department has seen, ***“Significant reductions in funding from the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (NCIPC) at the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) – injury and traumatic brain injury surveillance and prevention programs [have had their] budget cut 33%.”*** She also describes the additional challenges for government health agencies: ***“[We are] applying for all the federal funds we can. [We are] trying to work with private foundations, but as a state agency we are limited in this.”***

Another Public Health Worker from Aurora, Colorado described: ***“[As a result of the funding cuts, we are] unable to fully participate in some activities due to less staffing and available time, [and we are] unable to move projects underway forward to completion.”***

*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).*