



American
Public Health
Association



APHA PHACT Campaign

PUBLIC HEALTH ACTION CAMPAIGN



The State of Public Health in Georgia

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 Georgia 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:** Georgia spends an average of \$17.02 a year on the public health needs of each resident, one of the lowest levels in the nation. Total public health spending in Georgia, including federal sources such as money from HRSA and CDC, amounts to an average of \$138 per person, which is below the national median.
- **Infectious Disease:** Georgia has high rates of sexually transmitted infections including syphilis, Chlamydia and AIDS. Increased funding for prevention and early detection could help to lower the rates of these infectious diseases.
- **Access to Care:** 17.7 percent of the population is uninsured, giving Georgia the 13th highest rate of uninsured persons in the nation.
- **Health Disparities:** African Americans in Georgia are 44 percent more likely to experience premature death than whites. Residents of rural areas are 47 percent more likely to die prematurely than those who live in the suburbs of large cities.
- **The Road Ahead:** Georgia has made recent improvements in many public health areas, such as decreasing its percentage of smokers. However, the state still faces many public health challenges, such as an obesity rate that has almost tripled since 1990.

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 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.