



## *The State of Public Health In Delaware*

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.

- Delaware spent \$246 per capita on public health programs in 2006; public health spending in Delaware is currently one of the highest in the US, ranking 8<sup>th</sup> in 2006.
- The percent of uninsured Delawareans dropped from 14.5% in 2005 to 13.0% in 2006, placing Delaware above the national average. In 2006, Delaware ranked 20<sup>th</sup> in percent uninsured.
- Immunization coverage for children increased significantly from 76.3% in 2004 to 86.0% in 2005; as a result, the rate of immunization is now ranked 9<sup>th</sup>, which is above the national average.
- Between 2005 and 2006 Delaware saw a sharp rise in obesity, growing from 21.0% to 23.5%. At the same time, smoking prevalence decreased significantly from 24.3% in 2005 to 20.6% in 2006.

Sources: *America's Health Rankings, 2005 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 Dover, Delaware told us, "HRSA's Trauma-EMS Systems grant program was being used to support both our State Trauma System and our State Injury Prevention Programs. Progress in both of these programs will slow because of loss in the HRSA funding." She also noted the additional challenges for personnel: "We have lost our CDC grant-funded injury epidemiologist so no longer have this resource to provide analysis of injury data for injury prevention groups statewide."*

*Another Public Health Worker 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).*