

**About the Division of Public Health**

A division of the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), the Division of Public Health (DPH) works to “promote and contribute to the highest possible level of health for all North Carolinians.”<sup>1</sup> To fulfill this mission, DPH supports health services and health promotion programs protecting communities from adverse conditions such as communicable diseases and contaminated food and water, as well as reducing the impact of chronic and oral diseases. The work of DPH impacts all North Carolinians who enjoy benefits like safe food and water, emergency preparedness, infectious disease control, and waste treatment and sanitation.<sup>1</sup> The Division is overseen and guided by the Commission for Public Health, which is the rulemaking body for the public health system.<sup>2</sup> DPH is further divided into specialized sections that address a wide variety of health-related topics. These sections are:

Administrative, Local, and Community Support	Provides direct and indirect services to local health agencies and the public, and supports business operations of DPH <sup>3</sup>
Chronic Disease and Injury	Works to reduce the prevalence of chronic disease and injury, such as asthma, diabetes, tobacco use, and cancer, through education, direct medical service, community outreach, and policy development <sup>4</sup>
Environmental Health	Monitors and oversees sanitation requirements for facilities such as child care centers, food-handling establishments, and water treatment systems <sup>5</sup>
Epidemiology	Researches the factors that determine the prevalence and distribution of disease in communities in order to reduce health risks <sup>6</sup>
State Center for Health Statistics	Collects and reports health-related data to inform decision-making and policy affecting health <sup>7</sup>
Office of the Chief Medical Examiner	Network of medical providers who investigate deaths due to violence, injury, or unusual circumstances <sup>8</sup>
Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities	Works to reduce health disparities through research, cultural diversity and language training, partnership development, and supporting policy change <sup>9</sup>
Oral Health	Advances oral and overall health through screenings, education, preventive services, and an oral health epidemiology program <sup>10</sup>
State Laboratory of Public Health	Provides medical and environmental lab services for public and private health providers <sup>11</sup>
Vital Records	Maintains records of vital events—births, deaths, marriages, and divorces <sup>12</sup>
Women’s and Children’s Health	Promotes the health of women and children through a variety of programs including the WIC nutrition program, immunizations, and early intervention <sup>13</sup>

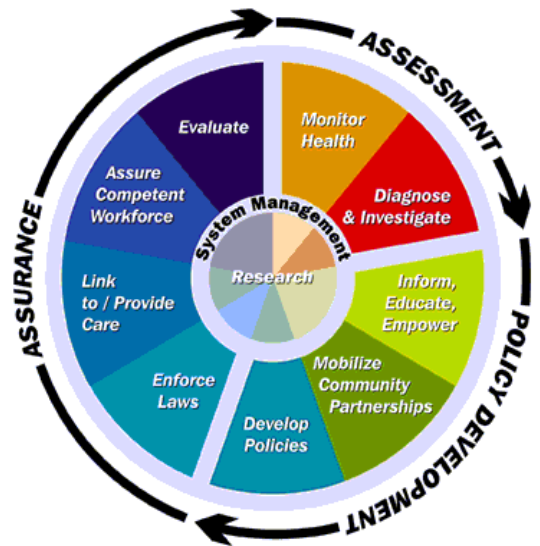
**The Role of the Division of Public Health in Influencing Health**

The Division of Public Health enforces state health laws and regulations and implements public health programs and services. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has outlined the work of public health agencies as providing the following services:<sup>1</sup>

1. Monitor health status to identify community health problems.
2. Diagnose and investigate health problems and health hazards in the community.
3. Inform, educate, and empower people about health issues.
4. Mobilize community partnerships to identify and solve health problems.
5. Develop policies and plans that support individual and community health efforts.
6. Enforce laws and regulations that protect health and ensure safety.

7. Link people to needed personal health services and assure the provision of health care when otherwise unavailable.
8. Assure a competent public health and personal health care workforce.
9. Evaluate effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of personal and population-based health services.
10. Research for new insights and innovative solutions to health problems.

**Figure 1. 3 Core Functions and 10 Essential Services of Public Health**



Much of this work is supported by federal funding. DPH is the state administrator for many federal health and human services programs such as the special supplemental nutrition program for women, infants, and children (WIC), the CDC’s public health and disease prevention programs, early intervention services, and the child and adult care food program.<sup>14,15</sup> DPH does some of this work at the state level, but much of the work is done through state-local partnerships between DPH and local health departments.<sup>1</sup>

**Funding**

DPH receives both federal and state dollars to fund its activities. In state fiscal year (SFY) 2017, the Division of Public Health received over \$858 million from federal, state, and other<sup>a</sup> funding streams, with the majority of public health funding coming from block grants from federal agencies.<sup>16,17</sup> The largest amount of funding (\$426 million) comes from the US Department of Agriculture for food and nutrition programs, followed by funds from the US Department of Health and Human Services, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (see Figure 2), as well as other federal agencies. The North Carolina General Assembly provided a net appropriation of \$157 million for FY 2017.<sup>10</sup>

Source: NC Division of Public Health. NC Department of Health and Human Services. About Us: Mission and Core Functions. NC Department of Health and Human Services website. <http://publichealth.nc.gov/mission.htm>. Accessed August 1, 2017.

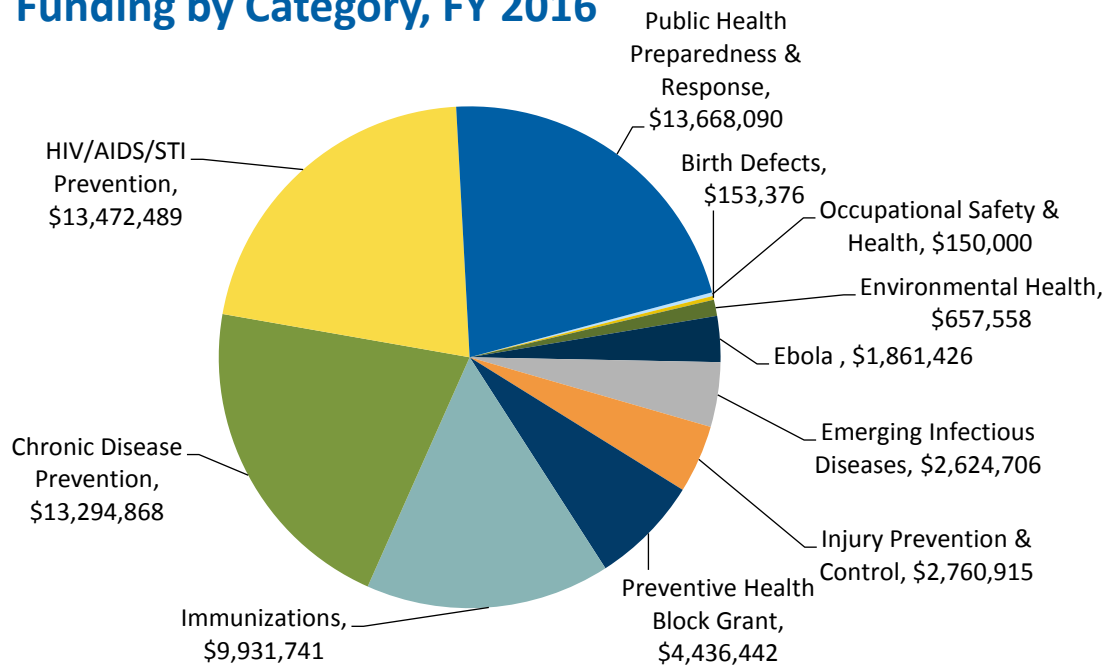
Funding for local health departments and service costs (e.g. drug costs and WIC food costs) consistently account for almost 75% of DPH’s expenditures.<sup>17,18</sup> The largest portions of funding in DPH’s budget go toward the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) nutrition program, child and adult nutrition services, communicable disease prevention and control, early intervention services for young children and their families, and maternal and infant health.<sup>16</sup> These program and service areas are funded with both state and federal dollars, with the exception of WIC, which is entirely federally-funded.<sup>19</sup>

As of 2016, North Carolina ranked 43<sup>rd</sup> in the U.S. for public health funding<sup>c</sup>, spending \$48 per person on population health activities. The U.S. average for public health spending is \$94 per person.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Other sources of funding include private grants, and revenue from fees, permits, and transfers from other agencies.

<sup>c</sup> Includes state funding and federal funding from the CDC and HRSA. Does not include funding from local governments or state spending for health-related activities through other departments such as education.

**Figure 2. CDC Division of Public Health Grant Funding by Category, FY 2016**



Data from: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Fiscal Year 2016 Grants Summary Profile Report for North Carolina. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website. [https://www.cdc.gov/FundingProfilesApp/Report\\_Docs/PDFDocs/Rpt2016/North-Carolina-2016-CDC-Grants-Profile-Report.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/FundingProfilesApp/Report_Docs/PDFDocs/Rpt2016/North-Carolina-2016-CDC-Grants-Profile-Report.pdf). Accessed August 1, 2017.

Note: Certain grants and expenditures by the CDC were out of scope of this report and were not included. Therefore, this graph does not reflect the entire expenditures by the CDC in North Carolina.

**How the Division of Public Health Influences Population Health**

North Carolina’s statewide public health system is multi-sectoral, involving local health departments, community agencies and organizations, hospitals, community health centers, and nonprofit organizations. DPH plays an important role in driving collaboration, identifying opportunities to improve health, and engaging partners.<sup>1</sup> DPH serves as the lead agency in the implementation of [Healthy North Carolina 2020: A Better State of Health](#), the current iteration of the state’s 10-year health improvement plan.<sup>21</sup> *Healthy North Carolina 2020* outlines 40 health objectives within 13 subject areas. The plan provides DPH and DHHS, other state agencies, local health departments, and other organizations with shared measures and goals to make North Carolina a healthier state. The 2020 priority areas are:

- Tobacco Use
- Physical Activity and Nutrition
- Injury and Violence
- Sexually Transmitted Disease and Unintended Pregnancy
- Maternal and Infant Health
- Substance Abuse
- Mental Health

- Infectious Disease and Foodborne Illness
- Oral Health
- Social Determinants of Health
- Environmental Health
- Chronic Disease
- Cross-cutting Issues

DPH’s sections and their various branches work within the public health system on relevant programs, initiatives, and policies in these priority areas at the state and local levels, and DPH’s annual report focuses on progress toward Healthy

North Carolina 2020. Many local health departments have chosen health priorities in alignment with the state’s plan for their own community health assessments, further coordinating efforts across North Carolina.<sup>22</sup> As of the end of 2016, progress has been made toward several objectives of Healthy North Carolina 2020, and these priorities will continue to shape the work of the Division under the current plan.<sup>23</sup>

## Impact

Every North Carolinian benefits from the work of DPH. Among the many roles of DPH:<sup>1</sup>

- DPH works to ensure that North Carolinians have access to safe food and water, and to identify and warn residents when contamination has occurred.
- DPH promotes the health and well-being of our communities by detecting, preventing and responding to infectious outbreaks.
- DPH helps North Carolinians lead healthier lives by working to reduce chronic diseases and injuries and promoting healthy behaviors and communities.

DPH, through its partnerships with the 85 local public health agencies in North Carolina, serves all 100 counties in the state, and addresses a wide scope of health priorities.<sup>22</sup> In partnership with local public health agencies, DPH supports programs, policies, and services to improve the health and well-being of communities across North Carolina.<sup>1</sup>

## References

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<sup>16</sup> North Carolina Office of State Budget and Management. Certified Budget Biennium 2017-19: DHHS - Public Health. Raleigh, NC. [https://files.nc.gov/ncosbm/documents/files/2017-19\\_Certified\\_2B0\\_HHS\\_Public.pdf](https://files.nc.gov/ncosbm/documents/files/2017-19_Certified_2B0_HHS_Public.pdf). Published October 6, 2017. Accessed October 18, 2017.

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<sup>22</sup> NC Division of Public Health. NC Department of Health and Human Services. 2016 Annual Report to the North Carolina Medical Society. Raleigh, NC. <http://publichealth.nc.gov/docs/2016-NCMS-AnnualReport-WEB-20160914.pdf>. Published September, 2016. Accessed August 1, 2017.

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