

PUBLIC HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PARTNERSHIP

LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH INDICATORS

CREATING THE LIST OF INDICATORS

The workgroup has been meeting since 2006 to identify a set of local public health indicators that could be used to help measure health status and determinants of health in Washington's 35 local public health jurisdictions. The workgroup recognized that the health of every community occurs within a unique socio-demographic context that determines, in part, the nature of its health problems and the ability of public health programs to address them.

The workgroup's first task was to identify criteria that would direct selection of the indicators. These criteria were used as guiding principles to ensure that the selected measures would be relevant across Washington's diverse communities and that the reported data would be valid, reliable, and accessible.

The panel determined that each of the indicators, to the extent possible, should:

- Measure an important aspect, result, or outcome of public health's work.
- Be population-based or generalizable to populations as a whole.
- Be measurable — that is, defined in standard and specific terms.
- Represent data that are feasible (and not too expensive) to collect.
- Be actionable — the public health system can implement activities to improve performance against the measure.
- Be reportable for at least 80% of local health jurisdictions, meeting requirements regarding sample size, margin of error and completeness.
- Measure either health determinants or status.
- Be measurable over time to determine trends.
- Link to and be consistent with local, state, and national measures (such as Healthy People 2010).
- Be measurable for population sub-groups (age, gender, race, etc.) to identify disparities across groups.
- Be understandable and not require extensive explanation.
- Be based on data of appropriate validity.

The workgroup approved the final set of 32 indicators in June 2007. Certain indicators that were desired by the workgroup were limited by the data available. Other indicators of public health significance, but low in incidence for the majority of local health jurisdictions, were not included on the indicator list but will continue to be monitored.

The local public health indicators website was launched in November 2007. At that time data were available and reported for 27 of the 32 indicators. In October 2009, the website was updated for the first time, including data on 31 of the 32 indicators. In 2011 the update included 4 new indicators, bringing the total to 35.

The plan is to update the indicator data every two years. The Public Health Indicators workgroup reviews the indicators and data definitions and makes changes as needed. The latest update is being rolled out in the Spring of 2014. There will be 31 indicators posted this time as 4 indicators are now available from the [County Health Rankings](#).



RATIONALE FOR INDICATORS

The Public Health Indicators workgroup — part of the Washington State Public Health Improvement Partnership — selected 35 local public health indicators to measure community-based results and outcomes of the state's public health system. The indicators are a mix of health status and health determinants. They measure six key aspects of public health: Community Context, Communicable Disease, Prevention and Health Promotion, Maternal and Child Health, Access to Care, and Environmental Health.

Following is the list of indicators by category, and a brief statement of the rationale and data source for each one. The [Technical Notes](#) provide more detailed information about each indicator.