

Foundational Public Health Services

A New Vision for Keeping Every Child and Family in Washington Safe and Healthy

WASHINGTONIANS ARE AT RISK

Washington State's public health system has long been recognized as a national leader, but to meet today's challenges in a rapidly changing world we must rethink which public health services are most important, how they should be provided, and how they should be funded.

- If we don't change course soon, kids will have shorter lives than their parents.
- Many suffer from preventable illness and premature death that cost Washingtonians and employers billions of dollars in health care, \$2.5 billion just from tobacco. We know what needs to be done to ensure all Washingtonians reach their healthiest potential. We need the capacity to do it.
- Basic public health service levels vary unacceptably depending on where you live in the state.

DELIVERING ON THE VISION

Public Health officials and local leaders from across the state have worked together to identify the basic level of public health services that should be available to all Washingtonians.

Next session these leaders will ask legislators to join local jurisdictions and help to create a cost-efficient and effective public health system that ensures the costs of basic public health services are provided in every community through dedicated revenue and incentivizing local investments.

WHAT'S AT STAKE

Foundational Public Health Services are services for which health departments are the only or primary provider, statewide; services focused on prevention; and services mandated by laws.

Only health departments swiftly identify – and stop – communicable diseases such as measles to keep everyone safe. If one of us fails to successfully identify and track a case of measles, others needlessly get sick and/or die.

Only health departments ensure our drinking water is safe, free from contaminants and disease. The recent crisis in Flint, Michigan highlights the importance of this work.

Only health departments respond to – and mitigate – the dangerous human health conditions that arise during natural and man-made disasters. The quick work of several health departments to test soil and water during the Oso mudslide is a great example of public health's emergency response role.

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