

STATE OF COLORADO

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Dedicated to protecting and improving the health and environment of the people of Colorado

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Colorado Department
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Colorado Public Health Reauthorization Act – SB 08-194 Executive Summary

On June 4, 2008, Gov. Bill Ritter signed the Colorado Public Health Reauthorization Act that requires identified boards, agencies, and public officials to collaboratively develop state and local public health plans that set priorities for the public health system in Colorado. The primary purpose of the Act is to assure that core public health services are available to every person in Colorado with a consistent standard of quality.

An effective public health system reduces health care costs by preventing disease and injury, promoting healthy behavior, and reducing the incidents of chronic diseases and conditions. Each community in Colorado should provide high-quality public health services regardless of its location. Under the new law, each county must establish a local public health agency or be a part of a district public health agency organized under a local board of health with a public health director and other staff necessary to provide public health services. In addition, the state of Colorado must have a comprehensive public health plan by December 31, 2009, that outlines how quality public health services will be provided. Local/district public health agencies must adopt a public health plan as soon as practicable following the adoption of the state's comprehensive public health plan.

The law calls on public officials including the State Board of Health, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE), County Commissioners, Local Public Health Agencies, Local Public Health Directors and Local Boards of Health to work together to develop a Statewide Public Health Improvement Plan that will become the model for Local Public Health Improvement Plans. In addition to collaborating on the development of these plans, each group of officials has respective powers and duties to be completed as set forth in the Act.

The law calls on these identified boards, agencies and officials to:

- identify and provide leadership for the provision of essential public health services;
- develop and support an information infrastructure that supports essential public health services and functions;
- develop and provide effective education and training for members of the public health workforce; and
- develop performance-management standards for the public health system that are tied to improvements in public health outcomes or other measures.

Public health partners will have opportunities to participate through a variety of venues including work groups, forums, focus groups, and surveys to guide the development of practical policies that will improve delivery of public health services.

The scope of improvements included in the statewide plan and corresponding local plans may be limited by the amount of available state and local funds, and the level of additional support that might be committed by state and local governments and other partners.

If a local public health agency cannot feasibly provide certain public health services directly, they may opt to share resources with community partners or neighboring health agencies to assure that core services are accessible. If a local public health agency does not receive sufficient funds to provide all services, the local board of health will set priorities for fulfilling them and include it in their local public health plan.

The Statewide Public Health Improvement Plan is intended to accomplish all of the following:

- Set public health priorities.
- Guide the public health system in targeting core public health services and functions through program development implementation and evaluation.
- Increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the public health system.
- Identify areas needing greater resource allocation to provide essential public health services.
- Incorporate goals and priorities of public health plans developed by county or district public health agencies.
- Consider available resources, including but not limited to state and local funding, and be subject to modification based on actual subsequent allocations.

Highlights of duties for the various entities include:

State Board of Health – Establish by rule core public health services that local public health agencies must provide based on available appropriations; set minimum quality standards for public health services; identify minimum qualifications for local public health directors and medical officers, as well as county and district public health directors and medical officers. And by July 1, 2009, if practicable, the board is to establish a formula for allocating appropriated state funds to local public health agencies based on input from the CDPHE and from local public health agencies.

Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment – Develop a Statewide Public Health Improvement Plan by December 31, 2009 and every five years thereafter; allocate any moneys that the state general assembly may appropriate for distribution to local public health agencies for the provision of local health services, in accordance with the approved funding formula; and provide technical assistance developing improvement plans to local public health agencies.

County Government – Establish by resolution a local public health agency or participate in a district public health agency by July 1, 2009. Determine the services needed to carry out the state public health laws and rules according to the specific needs and resources available within the community and consistent with the state and local/district plans.

Local Public Health Agencies – Prepare a local or district public health plan consistent with the statewide improvement plan as soon as practicable after the first statewide public health improvement plan is completed December 31, 2009. State and local plans are to be updated on a five-year cycle following the initial plan. Local public health agencies also are to provide or arrange for the provision of quality, core public health services deemed essential by the state board and the comprehensive statewide public health improvement plan. If there are insufficient funds to provide the above services, local/district agencies must set priorities for providing services and include the priority list in the local/district plan.

Local Boards of Health – Establish a local/district public health agency in accordance with the Act by July 1, 2009; determine the services needed to carry out the state public health laws and rules according to the specific needs and resources available within the community and as set out in the state and local/district public health plans; and direct the local/district public health agency to complete a community health assessment and local/district health plans every five years.

Local Public Health Directors – Hire and manage all personnel required by the agency; administer and enforce the state's public health laws, rules, and orders according to the specific needs and resources available within the community; and direct the available resources needed to carry out the local public health plan.