



BOARD OF HEALTH

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Black Hawk County Board of Health Position Statement on Advocacy for Public Health

State and local health departments are facing extreme challenges in fulfilling their role of protecting and promoting public health. The current fiscal environment passes reductions in funding for critical services down to the state, and then from the state to local health departments. To serve our Iowa residents adequately, public health must have a robust and stable infrastructure that includes funding for materials (e.g., vaccines, medical supplies, preparedness supplies), staffing, training, and implementation of programs to prevent disease.

Public Health keeps children healthy by screening newborns for health problems, helping children living in poverty receive essential preventive services and well-child care, and ensuring that immunizations are completed. Public health protects and improves the health of communities by training and ensuring community safety in the event of disasters, promoting healthy lifestyles to reduce chronic disease, providing health services in rural areas, and helping to prevent infectious diseases.

Public health saves lives. Every 10% increase in public health spending decreases infant deaths by 6.9%, cardiovascular deaths by 3.2%, diabetes deaths by 1.4%, and cancer deaths by 1.1%. Public health also offers an excellent return on investment: for every \$1 spent on prevention, there is a \$5.60 savings in health spending. For every \$1 spent on childhood vaccines, there is a \$16.50 savings in future health care costs. Prevention spending is critically underfunded; 75% of health spending in the US is for preventable chronic conditions, but only 3 cents of each \$1 spent is for public health or prevention. Increased funding for public health would provide for more comprehensive public health education and programming that would further enhance our ability to prevent disease and lower medical costs.

The Black Hawk County Board of Health advocates for increased funding for Public Health to ensure that critical services and research will continue to protect, promote, and preserve the health of the community.

Statement adopted: November 29, 2017