

Summary of Results from the Local Public Health Survey

Eighty-nine of Iowa's 99 counties completed a voluntary survey in June 2007 regarding their ability to meet the local criteria of the Iowa Public Health Standards. The survey provided the Work Group for Redesigning Public Health in Iowa and local public health with valuable baseline information and a snapshot report of compliance with the local criteria. Many counties are well on their way in meeting the local criteria of the standards. The average county is able to completely meet almost half of the 145 local criteria. From year to year, local boards of health and local public health agencies will be able to use this survey along with other tools, to focus on continued quality improvement and performance.

The areas of highest compliance with the local criteria were:

- assuring emergency preparedness
- conducting disease surveillance and disease follow up
- providing environmental core services
- having information technology systems in place
- providing basic administrative structures
- complying with the Iowa Code and Iowa Administrative Code

The areas needing improvement to meet the local criteria were:

- conducting systematic program evaluation
- conducting strategic planning
- monitoring injury trends
- coordinating prevention strategies for intentional and unintentional injuries
- using trend data and analysis
- assessing workforce competencies

While good data were received in terms of the capacity of counties to comply with local criteria of the standards, the financial information collected was inconclusive. The wide range of responses for budgetary and cost estimate questions provides no solid conclusions. Due to the vast inconsistencies in how counties define public health, calculate public health budgets, and estimate additional costs and staff hours to fully meet the local criteria, no accurate statewide estimates can be made from the data. Further study of the cost for counties to fully meet the local criteria of the Iowa Public Health Standards is needed.

The local public health survey was completed as part of the Redesigning Public Health in Iowa initiative. The long-term goal of the initiative is for Iowa to have a fully integrated public health system. The initiative will also include an assessment of the Iowa Department of Public Health and the State Board of Health to comply with the state criteria of the Iowa Public Health Standards.

The Work Group for Redesigning Public Health in Iowa wished to thank the counties that participated in the survey.