

"Public health acts on the knowledge that health is a fundamental resource to the individual, to the community and to society as a whole and must be supported by soundly investing in living conditions that create, maintain and protect health." ~ Ilona Kickbusch

Milestones in Public Health

Parents are responsible for the health of their children. They encourage good hygiene, practice food safety, use seatbelts and child seats, and get their children immunized. How do families know to do these things? How does this affect the health of the general population? Who's responsible for safeguarding and improving the public's health?



The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) states public health is "the active protection of our nation's health and safety, credible information to enhance health decisions, and partnerships with local minorities and organizations to promote good health." Using a combination of medicine, hygiene, and public education, federal, state and local agencies work together to develop, implement and promote policies to ensure the public is healthy. And, it's working! The CDC says since 1900, public health promotion is responsible for increasing life expectancy by 25 years in the United States.

TOP 10 Below is an overview of **Ten Great Public Health Achievements** in the 20th Century, adapted from the CDC Web site (www.cdc.gov/about/history/tengpha.htm).

Immunizations not only help protect children from disease, they help prevent the spread of disease, and have significantly reduced childhood deaths. Immunizations help minimize the cost of healthcare, because it's less expensive to give a vaccine than to treat the illness the shot is meant to prevent. A child who is vaccinated is healthier, misses fewer school days, and most importantly, is less apt to get a disease that could be dangerous, especially if the child has special healthcare needs.

Motor-Vehicle Safety – Motor vehicle injuries and death were once so common, they were a type of epidemic. Public health officials used the same strategy to prevent car accidents that they used to prevent epidemics. They recommended changes in the vehicles (humans), the roads (environment), and promoted public awareness of the problem. Cars now have headrests, seat belts, and other safety features. Road improvements include reflective centerlines and guardrails. And, there is widespread public education about the use of seatbelts, child safety seats, and booster seats.

Workplace Safety - Improved ventilation and safety equipment, and better job training has decreased on-the-job injury and accidents. In addition, many workplaces now provide substance abuse counseling, which also decreases the incidence of job-related injury and accidents.

Control of Infectious Diseases - The development of antibiotics, childhood immunizations, and improved sanitation have markedly decreased infant and child deaths, and dramatically increased life expectancy for everyone.



Heart Disease & Stroke has been greatly reduced due to a combination of new medications, advances in medical technology & behavior changes, such as decreased smoking & improved diets.

Safer & Healthier Foods - As with other advances in public health, science and hygiene helped decrease the spread of diseases and infections by contaminated food and water. Refrigeration, pasteurization and sanitation, especially promotion of hand washing by food workers, and the use of pesticides on crops contribute to a safer and healthier food supply.



Healthier Mothers & Babies – Mothers and their babies are healthier due to better access to pre-natal care, improved nutrition, reduced exposure to environmental hazards like smoking, and better technology to monitor the mother's and baby's health. Health promotions, such as the Back to Sleep campaign, helped educate the public about, and decrease the incidence of, SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome).



Family Planning – Federal funding for family planning services and more types of birth control contribute to the overall health of babies and families. There are fewer unintended pregnancies, now that women can more reliably plan the time between births. And, their children are healthier, and so are they.

Fluoridation of Drinking Water decreases the incidence of dental caries (tooth decay). This is the single biggest contributing factor to improved oral health.

Tobacco as a Health Hazard – Smoking is no longer the glamorous & socially accepted behavior it once was. State laws prevent smoking in public places, like restaurants. There are also better treatments and supports to help people quit.



Future Goals – Every 10 years, the Office of Disease Prevention & Promotion (www.odphp.osophs.dhhs.gov/) develops a set of health promotion goals to improve the nation's health. For example, a 2010 goal for youth is to promote healthy eating and physical activity to reduce and prevent unhealthy weight. Also, the 2010 goals, for the first time, specifically addressed the needs of children & youth with special healthcare needs. Learn more about the development and challenges of the 2020 goals at www.healthypeople.gov/hp2020/.

Family Voices is a national grassroots network of families and friends speaking on behalf of children with special health needs. Our children are also part of the wider world of children. With an Improving Understanding of MCH grant, Family Voices works to encourage partnerships between families and professionals for children's good health. **Bright Futures: Family Matters** is a publication to share with your networks. Check out our Family Voices web sites at www.brightfuturesforfamilies.org and

Partners...



For more than 65 years, the **Maternal and Child Health Bureau Title V Block Grant Program** has been working in partnership with each state and jurisdiction to improve the health of mothers and children. The goals of each state's program is to ensure all children, including children with special healthcare needs (CSHCN), receive immunizations, well-child care, diagnosis and treatment, to make sure pregnant women have access to health care, and to decrease infant death and disability. In addition, states work toward providing comprehensive health care that is family-centered, community-based, culturally competent, and that systems of care for CSHCN are coordinated. Visit the Title V Information System at <https://perfddata.hrsa.gov/mchb/mchreports/Search/search.asp> to learn about Title V in your state. Find your state Title V Director and CSHCN Contact at https://perfddata.hrsa.gov/mchb/mchreports/link/state_links.asp.

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Parklawn Building, Room 18-05
5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, Maryland 20857
<http://www.mchb.hrsa.gov/programs/blockgrant/overview.htm>

Family Resource Corner



Want to learn more about Title V? Visit the **Families and Title V Project** on the Family Voices Web site, where you can read tip sheets, actions plans, and other materials that help families create and support family participation in Title V programs. These resources and the **Getting to Know Title V** booklet are available at www.familyvoices.org/projects/titleV.php.

Learn about the history of Maternal and Child Health, read about legislation that created the Title V programs, listen to oral histories of family partnership, and more at the **MCH Timeline** at www.mchb.hrsa.gov/timeline/.

Stop Bullying Now is an interactive Web site designed for kids, and includes an adult section, in English **en Español**. There are examples of different types of bullying, what kids can do about it, and guidance to help identify bullying behaviors they may have. Kids can reinforce what they learn through animated Webisodes, and games. In addition, there are tip sheets, resources and ideas for promoting the **Stop Bullying Now** campaign with youth. Learn more at www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov.

If you are a grandparent raising grandchildren, and would like information about benefits and assistance, health and safety, data and publications, and a listing of resources by state, visit www.usa.gov/Topics/Grandparents.shtml (English) or <http://www.usa.gov/gobiernousa/index.shtml> (Español).

It's not quite summer time, but it's certainly time to start planning summer activities. At **My Summer Camps** you can search for a camp that matches your child's age and special interest, like sports, drama, or religion. The lists include camps for children with special needs. Find all this and more at www.mysummercamps.com.

What's New in Research?



There's one infectious 'condition' that public health agencies might like to see become an epidemic. Apparently, happiness is contagious! Dr. Nicholas Christakis, a social scientist at Harvard University, and James Fowler, a political scientist at the University of California at San Diego, studied almost 5,000 individuals over the course of 20 years. They found that election outcomes, money, health, job and marital status, are examples of positive social stimuli that can make people happy. In addition, they found people also "get happy" because family, neighbors or friends in their social networks are happy. Happiness is a social contagion. If your friends, or even your friends' friends are happy, chances are, you will be happy too. Read the entire article at www.bmj.com/cgi/content/full/337/dec04_2/a2338?maxtoshow=&HITS=10&hits=10&RESULTFORMAT=&fulltext=the+happiness+effect&searchid=1&FIRSTINDEX=0&resourcetype=HWCIT.

Tidbits for the Month



National Public Health Week (NPHW)

The theme song for The Partridge Family, a popular television show from the 70's was, "C'mon, Get Happy." In honor of National Public Health Week, perhaps the lyrics should be "C'mon, Get Healthy!" The American Public Health Association (www.apha.org) reports, "Americans are not as healthy as they should be." NPHW, April 6 – 12, 2009, focuses on opportunities for individuals, families, communities and public health organizations. Learn the facts, share your story, and get involved in community events. Learn more at www.nphw.org/nphw09.

National Public Health Week
April 6-12, 2009 • www.nphw.org



The Obama White House

In an administration of firsts, President Obama has created a new advisory position. Kareem Dale, who is partially blind, will be the Special Assistant on Disability Policy to the President. In a quote from the White House blog, Mr. Dale said, "It's a big deal. I started off in the civil rights movement. This is a civil rights movement. This is a

movement to make sure that we guarantee that all peoples in the world have the opportunity to succeed to the degree they are capable." Keep up with disability policy and other White House policy issues and events at www.whitehouse.gov.

Family Voices National Conference - The 2009 Family Voices Conference, *Looking Forward: Keeping Families at the Center of Children's Health Care*, will be held on May 3-5 at the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel in Washington, D.C. This dynamic conference will provide opportunities for family leaders and professionals to share critical information, best practices and resources that support families of children and youth with special health care needs and disabilities in the important role of partners in decision-making. REGISTER and SUBMIT WORKSHOP PROPOSALS NOW at <http://www.familyvoices.org/info/nc09/>. (Registration deadline – April 10. Proposal submission deadline – March 18.)

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