Strong public health infrastructure delivers value to Texans every day.

As Texas’ population grows and new health threats emerge, we must continue to invest in Texas’ public health infrastructure to prevent paying an even higher price in the future.

**PREPAREDNESS**

*Responding to Hurricane Harvey*

After Hurricane Harvey, swift public health response ensured access to safe food and water, flu and tetanus vaccines, and medical care. Local health departments and the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) used data and testing to control mosquitoes during flood cleanup, protecting Harvey survivors from vector-borne disease.

**PREVENTION**

*Combating Maternal Mortality*

An expert review of maternal mortality and morbidity data enabled Texas to confirm the majority of the state’s pregnancy-related deaths may have been prevented and African-American mothers are dying at twice the rate of white mothers. Accurate data are essential for efficiently targeting state resources toward improving the health of Texas mothers and babies.

**EARLY DETECTION**

*Newborn Screening in Texas’ One-of-a-Kind Laboratory*

The DSHS Public Health Laboratory tests all newborns in Texas for 53 different medical disorders, screening nearly 800,000 specimens per year. Identifying these conditions early helps avoid serious and costly complications such as developmental delays, disabilities, and premature death.

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“The Texas Public Health Coalition Recommends:

1. **Safeguard the public health laboratory.** Funding DSHS’ exceptional item request for public health laboratory funding will allow the state to continue providing required newborn screenings, retain highly skilled laboratory staff, and make desperately needed safety improvements to equipment and facilities.

2. **Support access to high-quality, current public health data.** Funding DSHS’ exceptional item request related to public health data will support evidence-driven approaches to public health decisionmaking.

3. **Equip state and local public health agencies to respond to disease outbreaks.** Funding DSHS’ exceptional item request for infectious disease response will maintain DSHS’ ability to conduct prompt outbreak investigations and disease identifications, and would stabilize the state’s outdated infectious disease reporting system currently at risk of failure.

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― Karen DeSalvo, MD, MPH, Professor of Population Health, UT Austin Dell Medical School
The Texas Public Health Coalition is a coalition of health professional organizations and health-focused organizations dedicated to disease prevention and health promotion.

MEMBERS

Alzheimer’s Association
American Cancer Society
Cancer Action Network
American Heart Association
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Texas
Children’s Hospital Association of Texas
The Cooper Institute
Harris County Public Health
The Immunization Partnership
March of Dimes
Methodist Healthcare Ministries
Texas Academy of Family Physicians
Texas Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
Texas Academy of Physician Assistants
Texas Association of City & County Health Officials
Texas Association of Community Health Centers
Texas eHealth Alliance
Texas Health Institute
Texas Hospital Association
Texas Medical Association
Texas Nurses Association
Texas Oral Health Coalition, Inc.
Texas Osteopathic Medical Association
Texas Pediatric Society
Texas Physicians for Social Responsibility
Texas Public Health Association
Texas Renal Coalition
Texas School Nurses Organization
Texas State Alliance of YMCAs
United Ways of Texas

RESOURCES

CANCER PREVENTION AND RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF TEXAS
MD ANDERSON CANCER CENTER
MICHAEL AND SUSAN DELLE CENTER FOR HEALTHY LIVING
PARTNERSHIP FOR A HEALTHY TEXAS
TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF STATE HEALTH SERVICES

REFERENCES

2. Texas Department of State Health Services, 2018. Newborn Screening Laboratory.