What Is Public Health Infrastructure?

- Agencies available to respond to the needs of the population
- Up-to-date data and information systems that provide critical information
- A capable and qualified workforce that delivers essential public health services every day to the population

Source: Healthy People 2030

Disasters, disease outbreaks, and pandemics can severely test Texas’ public health infrastructure. Ongoing improvements to the data system and an adequate and trained staff can help guarantee a strong public health infrastructure in the day-to-day and in times of crisis.

The Texas Public Health Coalition Recommends:

1. **Modernize Texas’ communication and data system** (collection, monitoring, planning, and reporting) to be statewide, integrated, interoperable, and bi-directional between the state and local entities.

2. **Support employee recruitment, hiring, and retention to sustain an adequate public health workforce.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROBLEMS</th>
<th>SOLUTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Case reporting from labs to state and local health departments remains untimely, inconsistent, or incomplete. During a disaster, this becomes especially problematic. | ✓ Enforce requirements for laboratories to report case results promptly and consistently  
✓ Extend these same expectations to other sites performing large-scale testing |
| Local health departments use outdated data systems that become strained under high volume of case reports. This causes backlogs and coding errors and slows the state's response to disease threats. In addition, data systems continue to not be interoperable. | ✓ Modernize state and local data systems to be interoperable and that work with existing data-collection tools |
| Public health entities have difficulty recruiting, hiring, and retaining staff to support necessary public health services, including the capability to analyze disease surveillance data and administer clinical and programmatic services. | ✓ Support efforts to recruit, hire, and retain staff, including trained epidemiologists, public health specialists/nurses, educators, community health workers, and more  
✓ Sustain this workforce at all times |

The Texas Legislature can ensure the state has a modernized public health system and ample workforce.
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 Heart Association
American Lung Association
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Texas
Children’s Hospital Association of Texas
The Cooper Institute
Harris County Public Health
The Immunization Partnership
It’s Time Texas
March of Dimes
Methodist Healthcare Ministries
National Service Office for Nurse-Family Partnership and Child First
Texas Academy of Family Physicians
Texas Academy of Physician Assistants
Texas Association of City & County Health Officials

Texas Association of Community Health Centers
Texas Chapter of the American College of Physicians Services
Texas Dental Association
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 Renal Coalition
Texas School Nurses Organization
Texas Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine
Texas State Alliance of YMCAs
United Ways of Texas

RESOURCES

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