Stop Cuts to Public Health

The Texas Legislature must ensure the state’s public health agencies can fulfill their lifesaving mission to prevent and eliminate disease.

Texas’ low spending on public health is evident in its health outcomes. Texas spends just $18 per resident on public health – less than half of what several other southern states spend – and ranks 41st in the nation for spending. Neglecting public health over time carries a high, avoidable price tag.

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State rankings are based on the percentage of adults with the health outcome or behavior. Source: America’s Health Rankings by United Health Foundation (2021, 2019)

When the state fails to invest in public health, Texans pay the price. For instance, years of disinvestment in basic functions amplified many of the challenges during COVID-19. And because of large gaps in local resources, the difficulty of Texas’ socially and economically diverse communities to confront public health disasters also became evident.

COVID-19 will not be the state’s last public health emergency. Texans depend on the state’s readiness to tackle the unexpected with every tool necessary. Texas can set a new precedent of consistent investment in public health to avoid repeating the harmful cycle of neglect and repair.

1. Maintain agency operations and infrastructure by fully funding the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) base budget. The backbone of a strong health care system is a robust public health infrastructure. Given rising costs, appropriate budget adjustments and increases are necessary.

2. Fully fund DSHS Exceptional Item Requests to:
   + Support businesses and economic needs
   + Improve public health response with technology tools
   + Ensure access to frontline public health services
   + Reduce the impact of preventable disease

The Texas Public Health Coalition Recommends:

TEXAS’ ANNUAL PUBLIC HEALTH SPENDING FALLS FAR BELOW OTHER SOUTHERN STATES’.

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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 DELL CENTER FOR HEALTHY LIVING
PARTNERSHIP FOR A HEALTHY TEXAS
TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF STATE HEALTH SERVICES
TEXAS PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION