

Government Shutdowns Harm Public Health

A Federal government shutdown is dangerous for public health. It compromises research, public health programming, and data collection. Inconsistent or postponed funding also deprives federal agencies of the necessary resources on which Americans depend. Some examples of how shutdowns negatively impact public health systems are:

DECREASED PROGRAM CAPACITY

- Furloughed employees cannot prepare for flu season, or monitor daily public health issues.
- States will have to front money for formula grant programs like Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).
- Agencies lose their ability to support initiatives like the annual flu program at the CDC and ongoing disease surveillance, leaving local public health authorities without access to complete or consistent viral spread data.
- Delays in payments to Federal grantees, States, localities, contractors, and individuals cause disruptions to essential public health programs.
- A government shutdown is more expensive than keeping it open due to paying employees not to work as well as late payment penalties and economic costs.

HALTED RESEARCH EFFORTS

- Application submission, award processing, no-cost extensions, and other tasks that require federal sponsor interactions for agencies will be stopped.
- New basic research supported by the federal government will pause.

NEGATIVE IMPACT ON THE PUBLIC

- Hundreds of patients won't be able to enroll in NIH clinical trials.
- Nonprofits with federal funding may face furloughs and layoffs.
- Thousands of federal employees will be furloughed or forced to work without pay.

CONGRESS MUST FUND HEALTH NOW

The Coalition for Health Funding urges Congress to do its job and fund all public health agencies under HHS in a timely and sustainable manner. A government shutdown or continuing resolution weakens public health programs and research and development. Congress must live up to its responsibility to sustain and strengthen our country's public health infrastructure.

KEY PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCIES

- CDC
- NIH
- SAMHSA
- IHS
- FDA
- HRSA
- ACF & ACL
- AHRQ