

Indiana Association of Local Boards of Health

Public Health Terms

Assessment: Regular and systematic collection, assembly, analysis, and the availability of community health information.

Assurance: Public health agencies assure that necessary services are provided to achieve community goals and objectives for healthy people.

Capacity Standards: Statements of what public health agencies must do as part of ongoing daily operations to adequately protect and promote health, prevent disease, injury and premature death.

Core Functions: The three basic functions of the public health system: assessment, policy development and assurance.

Environmental Health: An organized community effort to minimize the public's exposure to environmental hazards and prevent transmission of the disease or injury agent.

Epidemic: The occurrence in a community or region of disease cases in excess of expectancy.

Epidemiology: The study of diseases and injuries in the human population, their distribution and determinants.

Essential Services: Provide a working definition of public health and a guiding framework for the responsibilities of local public health systems.

Fee-for-service: A charge made for each unit of health service, usually set by the provider. Some service fees may be controlled by the State. Fees for state mandated programs are determined by cost methodology set by the State.

Foodborne Illness: Illness caused by the transfer of disease organisms or toxins from food to humans.

Groundwater: Water beneath the earth's surface between saturated soil and rock that supplies wells and springs.

Healthy People 2020: A prevention initiative that presents a national strategy for improving the health of America.

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV): The retrovirus (and RNA based virus) which causes AIDS.

Incidence: The number of new cases of a specific disease diagnosed or reported during a defined period of time.

Infectious Disease: A disease caused by organisms that cause infection in a human host and may be communicable (contagious) to other persons, animals or through other intermediaries.

Local Board of Health: Governing or advisory bodies who are appointed to protect and improve the health of the community.

Local Health Department: Local (county, city, combined city-county or multi-county) health agency with oversight and direction from local boards of health who provide health services throughout the defined geographic area.

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Managed Care: Health care provided within a system using a defined network of providers.

Medicaid: A program authorized under Title XIX of the Social Security Act to provide medical services to clients who meet eligibility requirements.

Medicare: Federal insurance program covering delivery of medical services to people ages 65 or older.

Morbidity: Incidence of disease or the state of being diseased.

Mortality: Incidence of death or the state of being deceased.

Outcome Standards: Long-term objectives that define optimal, measurable future levels of health status, maximum acceptable levels of disease, injury or dysfunction or prevalence of risk factors.

Point Source: Sources of pollution that can be readily identified because of their location of origin.

Policy Development: The process whereby public health agencies evaluate and determine health needs and the best way to address them.

Population-based: Pertaining to the entire population in a particular area.

Prevention: Actions taken to detect and reduce susceptibility or exposure to health problems.

Promotion: Health education and the fostering of healthy living conditions and lifestyles.

Public Health: Prevention of disease, injury or disability and promotion of good physical and mental health.

Quality Assurance: Monitoring and maintaining the quality of public health services through licensing and discipline of health professionals, licensing of health facilities and the enforcement of standards and regulations.

Risk Assessment: To identify and measure the presence of causes and risk factors that are thought to have a direct influence on the level of a specific health problem, based on scientific evidence or theory.

Risk Factor: Any personal or societal condition that leads to the possibility of a problem.

Sexually-transmitted Disease: Infectious disease that leads to the possibility of a problem.

Standards: Accepted measures of comparison having quantitative or qualitative value.

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS): Unexplained sudden death of an infant under one-year of age.

Surface Water: Any freshwater located above ground, such as rivers, lakes, and ponds.

Third-party Payment: Payment for health services provided through public or private insurance.