

Indiana Association of Local Boards of Health

Working with the Local Health Department

What Does the Local Health Department Do?

The local health department (LHD) is a leader in improving the health and well-being of the community.

Protects the community from health threats, the everyday and the exceptional.

The LHD guards multiple fronts to defend the community from any health threat, regardless of the source, and works tirelessly to prevent disease outbreaks. The LHD makes sure the tap water, restaurant food, and the air are all safe as well as being ready to respond to any health emergency (bioterrorism, SARS, West Nile Virus, or an environmental hazard).

Educates the community about health issues. The LHD gives provides information to the community that allows people to make healthy decisions every day, like exercising more, eating right, quitting smoking, or simply washing hands to keep from spreading illness. It provides this information through public forums in the community, public service announcements in the media, programs in schools, health education in homes and clinics, and detailed Web sites. During a public health emergency, the LHD provides important alerts and warnings to protect the community's health.

Provides healthy solutions for everyone. The LHD offers the preventive care to the community so people can avoid chronic disease and to help maintain their health. It provides flu shots for the elderly and helps mothers obtain prenatal care that gives their babies a healthy start. The LHD also helps provide children with regular check-ups, immunizations, and good nutrition to help them grow and learn.

Advances community health. The LHD plays a vital role in developing new policies and standards that address existing and emerging challenges to the community's health while enforcing a range of laws intended to keep you safe. The LHD is constantly working—through research and rigorous staff training—to maintain its unique expertise and deliver up-to-date, cutting-edge health programs.

Source: NACCHO (www.naccho.org)

Indiana Code

IC 16-20-1 Powers and Duties of Local Health Departments

Defines the powers and duties of Local Health Departments which apply to all local health officers and local health boards.

<http://www.in.gov/legislative/ic/code/title16/ar20/ch1.html>

Indiana Association of Local Boards of Health

IC 16-20-2 Local Boards of Health

Defines the composition of a Board of Health, including membership selection, appointment, term of office and removal.

<http://www.in.gov/legislative/ic/code/title16/ar20/ch2.html>

IC 16-20-3 Multiple County Health Departments

Defines the conditions should county executives of at least two (2) adjacent counties decide to establish and maintain a multiple county health department.

<http://www.in.gov/legislative/ic/code/title16/ar20/ch3.html>

IC 16-20-4 City Health Departments in Second Class Cities

Defines the formation, establishment, jurisdiction and authority of a city health department.

<http://www.in.gov/legislative/ic/code/title16/ar20/ch4.html>

IC 16-20-5 Area Boards of Health

Defines the authority of area boards of health including jurisdiction, membership, term of office, meetings and officers.

<http://www.in.gov/legislative/ic/code/title16/ar20/ch5.html>

IC 16-20-6 Acceptance of Gifts for County or City Health Department Buildings

Defines the authority to accept gifts to erect and equip buildings, the form of the gifts and the construction and equipment of buildings.

<http://www.in.gov/legislative/ic/code/title16/ar20/ch6.html>

IC 16-20-7 Assistance by Cities and Counties to Public Health Nursing Associations

Defines the authority of how a city or county may appropriate money out of the general fund of the city or county to assist incorporated public health nursing associations.

<http://www.in.gov/legislative/ic/code/title16/ar20/ch7.html>

IC 16-20-8 Food Service Inspections

Defines the checklist and narrative report regarding food service establishment inspections.

<http://www.in.gov/legislative/ic/code/title16/ar20/ch8.html>

IC 16-20-9 Penalties

Defines that a person who recklessly violates or fails to comply with this article commits a Class B misdemeanor.

<http://www.in.gov/legislative/ic/code/title16/ar20/ch9.html>

Source: Indiana State Department of Health (www.in.gov/isdh/24832.htm)

Indiana Association of Local Boards of Health

Ten Essential Services in Action at the Local Health Department

1. Monitor health status to identify community health problems
2. Diagnose and investigate health problems and health hazards in the community
3. Inform, educate and empower people about health issues
4. Mobilize community partnerships to identify and solve health problems
5. Develop policies and plans that support individual and community health efforts
6. Enforce laws and regulations that protect health and ensure safety
7. Link people to needed personal health services and assure the provision of healthcare when otherwise unavailable
8. Assure a competent public health and personal healthcare workforce
9. Evaluate the effectiveness, accessibility and quality of personal and population-based health services
10. Research new insights and innovative solutions to health problems

Monitor health status to identify and solve community health problems

Activities by state and/or local public health agencies

- Determine and monitor water quality
- Monitor water wells
- Monitor wastewater treatment and disposal
- Identification of water-quality problems
- Mosquito surveillance
- Immunizations
- STD/HIV testing and counseling
- Food-borne illness investigations
- Bio-emergency preparation and coordination
- Tracking of number of wells, abandoned wells
- Screening for diabetes
- Needs assessment
- Collection of child oral health data
- Child lead-poisoning surveillance

Indiana Association of Local Boards of Health

Diagnose and investigate health problems and health hazards in the community

Activities by state and/or local public health agencies

- Medical examiners
- Epidemiology
- TB
- HIV/AIDS
- Investigation and evaluation of nuisance complaints
- Wellhead assessments and site evaluations

Inform, educate and empower people about health issues

Activities by state and/or local public health agencies

- Community health education and health promotion
- Public health education through the media, presentations, the Internet, displays, etc.
- HIV/AIDS risk reduction curriculum
- Child-abuse education
- Domestic violence education
- WIC educational programs
- Informing, educating parties involved in nuisance investigations
- Public education about well construction

Mobilize community partnerships and action to identify and solve health problems

Activities by state and/or local public health agencies

- Tobacco-free coalitions
- Bio-emergency regional collaboration
- Collaborative efforts with private industry to combat domestic violence
- Community partnerships with law enforcement, county attorneys, community betterment groups, housing authorities
- Referrals and collaboration with health-care providers
- Collaboration with WIC, public health nursing, special-population advocates to meet the needs of special populations

Indiana Association of Local Boards of Health

Develop policies and plans that support individual and community health efforts

Activities by state and/or local public health agencies

- State board of health oversight and regulatory functions
- Local board of health oversight and regulatory functions
- Public hearings
- Administration of state and local public health departments
- Monitoring of contractors/providers
- Community health planning
- Strategic and performance planning
- Development of a plan to address housing needs
- Updating of health and nuisance ordinances
- Development of policies on investigations, police assistance and trespass and safety issues
- Board of health adoption of rules that require better management of water systems in small, rural subdivisions
- Determination of need for community water supplies
- Development of variance procedures
- Establishment of procedures for water well permits
- Establishment of civil citation authority
- Establishment of procedures to deal with contaminated or high risk sites
- Establishment of financial assistance for well sampling, plugging or rehabilitation

Enforce laws and regulations that protect health and ensure safety

Activities by state and/or local public health agencies

- Hazardous materials and sites inspections and certifications
- Milk inspections
- Professional licensure and regulation
- Food inspections
- Tanning and tattoo inspections
- Enforcement of state/county/local health-related rules and ordinances

Indiana Association of Local Boards of Health

Link people to needed personal health services and assure the provision of health care when otherwise unavailable

Activities by state and/or local public health agencies

- TB program
- Public health nursing services
- Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection program
- Maternal and child health
- WIC
- Critical Access Hospitals
- Linkages to regional landfills for disposal options
- Informing the public on useful nuisance-abatement web sites

Assure a competent public and personal health-care work force

Activities by state and/or local public health agencies

- Food-service worker Safety Certification Course
- Public health certification
- Learning management system
- Regional bio-emergency meetings
- Public health practitioner performance evaluations
- Sanitarian, water-contractor training
- Certification of environmental health professionals

Evaluate effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of personal and population-based health services

Activities by state and/or local public health agencies

- Data management
- Performance-plan monitoring
- Public health contract requirements
- Health needs assessments
- Tracking responses to complaints
- Permit issuance for nuisances
- Ensuring that wells drilled by certified people
- Sealing unused, unsafe wells

Indiana Association of Local Boards of Health

Research new insights and innovative solutions to health problems

Activities by state and/or local public health agencies

- Health needs assessments
- Bio-emergency survey participation
- Lighten Up survey participation
- Customer service evaluations
- Promotion of recycling and composting
- Study of successful public health programs in other jurisdictions
- Research on water-treatment methods

Source: Iowa Department of Public Health (www.idph.state.ia.us)