



Core Functions

The core functions of Public Health include Assessment, Policy Development, and Assurance. The ten essential Public Health services are listed below and categorized under the appropriate core function.

I. Assessment:

1. Monitor health status to identify and solve community health problems (e.g., community health profile, vital statistics, and health status).
2. Diagnose and investigate health problems and health hazards in the community (e.g., epidemiologic surveillance systems, laboratory support).

II. Policy Development:

3. Inform, educate, and empower people about health issues (e.g., health promotion and social marketing).
4. Mobilize community partnerships and action to identify and solve health problems (e.g., convening and facilitating community groups to promote health).
5. Develop policies and plans that support individual and community health efforts (e.g., leadership development and health system planning).

III. Assurance:

6. Enforce laws and regulations that protect health and ensure safety (e.g., enforcement of sanitary codes to ensure safety of environment).
7. Link people to needed personal health services and ensure the provision of health care when otherwise unavailable (services that increase access to health care).
8. Assure competent public and personal health care workforce (e.g., education and training for all public health care providers).
9. Evaluate effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of personal and population-based health services (e.g., continuous evaluation of public health programs).
10. Research for new insights and innovative solutions to health problems (e.g., links with academic institutions and capacity for epidemiologic and economic analyses).

* Institute of Medicine, Future of Public Health, 1988.

** A consensus list developed by federal health agencies in partnership with major national public health organizations, adopted: Fall 1994 by the Public Health Functions Steering Committee.