

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES



MISSISSIPPI
STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Public Health Services

All of us rely on public health every day of our lives. At the Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH), we are committed to making Mississippians safer and healthier. To this end, The Health Department — working in concert with partners in medicine, public health, public welfare, public safety, and other fields — deploys a broad array of services.

MSDH and other public health agencies nationwide balance three core functions to accomplish goals: assessing community health status, developing health policy and recommending programs, and assuring that necessary, high-quality, effective services are available. The programs described in this booklet address the third of those functions: assured services. The Department's services are organized into three functional areas: personal health, community health, and health regulation.

Personal Health Services ensure that pregnant women receive appropriate care, babies get a healthy start in life, and children with disabilities and special health problems can access the care and services they need. These services also address other special health needs of women, children, the elderly, and the disabled.

Community Health Services reduce occurrences of disease through immunizations, health education and information services, preventive interventions, and responses to outbreaks of communicable diseases.

Health Regulation ensures that water and milk supplies are safe to drink, that sewage is disposed of appropriately, that restaurants meet established sanitary conditions, and that child care and health care facilities and emergency medical services providers meet standards of quality.

At the center of the MSDH mission is service to the public — through our own public health professionals, through education and information, and through partnerships — resulting in protection for all Mississippians. Everyone who works at or with MSDH has the same mission: to help people live safer and healthier lives.

Personal Health Services

Child/Adolescent Health

By focusing on protection and taking steps to prevent health problems before they happen, we can ensure that tomorrow's children are safer and healthier. Child and adolescent services provide immunizations, well-child assessments, fluoride mouth rinse, dental services, newborn genetic screening, abstinence programs, services for special needs children, high risk infant services, and First Steps — Early Intervention Services for Infants and Toddlers.

Comprehensive medical services for children with chronic or disabling conditions are offered at eight separate locations statewide. Eligible conditions include major orthopedic, neurological, cardiac, and genetic conditions such as cystic fibrosis, sickle cell anemia, and hemophilia.

Comprehensive genetic services are available statewide. Six satellite genetic clinics and seven sickle cell clinics are strategically located to make genetic services accessible to all Mississippi residents on a referral basis.

WIC

Healthy foods and helpful advice is what WIC is all about. If you are pregnant, have had a baby in the past six months, are breastfeeding your baby under 12 months of age, have an infant, or have children under age five, you need to know about WIC.

WIC clients receive nutritional counseling and food supplements designed to promote healthy pregnancies and infants. The program includes advice to help reduce health problems associated with poor nutrition during pregnancy, infancy, and early childhood.

WIC encourages mothers to breastfeed, offering information and support to help each person make informed choices.

Family Planning

Family planning (reproductive health) services help Mississippians access confidential counseling, physical examination, education, and contraceptives. Services include access to Pap test screening for cervical cancer and referral for diagnostic and treatment services.

Maternity Services

In working to reduce infant deaths and the incidence of low-birthweight births in Mississippi, public health staff coordinate comprehensive, risk-appropriate prenatal care through local county health departments.

Local public health staff work with private providers to assure planned hospital delivery tailored to the risk of the mother and infant. Case management services are provided to high-risk pregnant women and infants. Postpartum home visiting services are provided to Medicaid-eligible mothers and infants.

Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening

Early detection is one of the most important factors in obtaining effective treatment of breast and cervical cancer. Screening services are available for eligible women. The program seeks to reach low income, uninsured or underinsured medically under-served women 50 years of age and older for mammography screening and those 45 years and older for cervical cancer screening.

Osteoporosis Screening and Awareness

Public awareness and knowledge about the cause of osteoporosis, personal risk factors, the value of prevention and early detection, and the options available for treatment can do much to reduce the impact of this condition on Mississippi's population.

The Department disseminates educational materials and information about services, prevention and treatment strategies to patients, health professionals, and the public. Services include patient screening and referrals.

Domestic Violence/Rape Prevention and Crisis Intervention

The Department of Health and its partners actively address the preventable, twenty-first century health problem of violence against children and women. By monitoring federal and state funding to 13 Domestic Violence Shelters and nine Rape Crisis Centers throughout Mississippi, the State Department of Health provides indirect help to ensure victims of crime receive needed services that promote independence and self-sufficiency. The Department remains focused on health issues and provides technical assistance and guided support.

Home Health

Home Health workers are located in communities throughout Mississippi to deliver a number of services to homebound patients under the care of a physician who need skilled nursing or therapy. This team builds on a history of public health nurse care and health education in the home, though today's methods of health care delivery are rapidly changing to offer greater access to care while reducing or stabilizing health care costs.

Community Health Services

Health Promotion

Health education and information programs help public officials, community groups, school administrators, employers, health professionals, and families make the best possible health decisions. The Health Department works on the local level to promote physical activity, nutrition, comprehensive school health, injury and violence prevention, and prevention and control of cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and arthritis.

Immunization

Many of the world's most deadly and widespread diseases have been contained or eliminated by focusing on prevention. The Department's Immunization Program seeks to eliminate illness and death caused by vaccine-preventable diseases in children, adolescents, and adults.

The program monitors immunization levels, provides disease surveillance and outbreak control, disseminates immunization information and education, and enforces immunization laws by monitoring compliance in school and day care centers.

Through the federal Vaccines for Children program, The Department provides free vaccine and raises awareness of the need for childhood immunizations.

The Immunization Registry is a statewide computerized monitoring and tracking system for public and private health care providers. The system ensures an accurate record of immunizations that individuals have received.

Statistics and Vital Records

Providing health information that people can rely on is an important element in protecting people's health and safety. The Health Department provides vital and health statistics to local, state, and federal agencies and supplies vital records services directly to the public.

Department staff provide certified copies of birth, death, and marriage records and file statistical reports of divorces. Statisticians analyze and interpret health data to identify interventions that can improve Mississippians' health. They compile and publish reports of life statistics and health resources.

Epidemiology

Infectious diseases can destroy lives, strain community resources, and threaten entire populations. In today's global environment, new diseases can potentially spread across the world in a matter of days, or even hours. MSDH plays a critical role in detecting diseases early and acting quickly to prevent widespread outbreaks.

The Department carefully monitors occurrences and trends of reportable diseases; investigates outbreaks of illnesses; helps interrupt outbreaks or disease transmission; and reports statistics and trends to the medical community and others.

Epidemiology staff also provide telephone consultation to health care providers and the public on such matters as communicable diseases, disease outbreaks, rabies exposure, and international travel requirements and recommendations.

STD/HIV

These confidential services help control the spread of sexually transmitted diseases — including syphilis, gonorrhea, chlamydia, hepatitis, and HIV and AIDS — by interrupting the disease processes and/or preventing transmission of the diseases. Services include identification, treatment, and contact follow-up. Staff help advance access to funds provided by several federal sources for housing, care, and services for people living with HIV disease.

Tuberculosis

Physicians, nurses, and other professional staff in the TB Program coordinate their efforts for early and rapid identification of people with or at risk of developing tuberculosis. The staff ensures appropriate treatment and follow-up of TB suspects, diagnosed cases, contacts and people with latent tuberculosis infection. The program promotes the latest methods and practices for TB treatment and follow-up and provides technical and educational assistance to public and private agencies and institutions such as hospitals, substance abuse treatment facilities, nursing homes, and mental and correctional facilities.

Public Health Laboratory

The everyday world provides a series of obstacles to continued good health, including air pollution, water supply contamination, unsafe conditions in our daily workplaces, and emergencies such as acts of bioterrorism.

MSDH works with state and federal agencies to train and prepare for mass emergencies and natural disasters. The Department's laboratory addresses both old and new health threats by providing low-cost, high-quality testing services. This assistance helps public health clinics, private physicians, hospitals, laboratories, public water systems, governmental entities, and individuals to prevent and diagnose disease and identify potential disease-causing conditions in the environment.

Health Regulation

Environmental Health

Environmental Health programs control public health hazards from sources of radiation, sewage, unsafe boiler and pressure vessels, and rats, mosquitoes, and other carriers of disease. Department environmentalists also enforce standards for protection of consumers against preventable hazards in food, milk, and drinking water.

Environmentalists inspect and grant permits to restaurants, fast food establishments, institutional cafeterias, schools, day care centers, and tanning beds.

Environmental Health staff ensure proper engineering, design, construction, operation, and maintenance of the state's nearly 1,500 public water supplies and enforce water quality standards of the Federal and Mississippi Safe Drinking Water Acts.

Licensure & Health Planning

MSDH provides protection for sick and elderly Mississippians by certifying health care facilities for participation in Medicare and/or Medicaid programs. The Department's licensing of long-term care facilities, hospitals, home health agencies, ambulatory surgical centers, surgical centers, personal care homes, and hospices ensures that quality standards are in place.

The state health-planning process assures balanced and adequate health care services by coordinating and approving plans for health services, facilities, and personnel statewide through the state's certificate of need (CON) program. Special rural health care needs are addressed through the Office of Rural Health.

The Child Care Program affords additional protection for children by licensing childcare facilities and summer youth camps and registering child residential homes. Professional Licensure licenses speech pathologists, audiologists, hearing aid dealers, dietitians, radiation technologists, and other health professionals.

Emergency Medical Services

The Department honors its commitment to health and safety by developing standards for and licensing emergency medical technicians and emergency medical service providers.

In addition, The Department helped establish and now monitors a uniform statewide trauma care system. The system ensures prompt response, efficient transport, and appropriate care for victims of traumatic injury by helping hospitals establish properly equipped and staffed trauma care centers and instituting statewide communication, transportation, and treatment access protocols.



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