

"We want communities taking action
to promote and preserve the health
of the people of Oregon."

—TURNING POINT STEERING COMMITTEE

A PLAN FOR A NEW CENTURY

TRANSFORMING PUBLIC HEALTH IN OREGON

Turning point

Public health concerns lie at the heart of community life and are central to the lives of all citizens. While government has traditionally served as the primary provider of public health services, state and county governments alone cannot ensure the health of the community. All community members play a role in creating an environment that supports health. Several basic factors determine a community's potential for health.

The basic factors that shape a community's health include:

- Socioeconomic conditions.
- Physical environment.
- Access to and quality of health care.
- Lifestyle and health-related behaviors.

Public health is often thought of as the government service that provides shots for kids, health services for poor people and certain environmental inspections. As the American health care delivery system changes, a new role for governmental public health emerges. In this role, the public health system:

- Shifts from providing services to working with communities to meet their needs.
- Enhances the comprehensive assessment of the entire population's health status.
- Emphasizes community involvement and community organizing.
- Includes regulation and licensing responsibilities.
- Focuses on promoting policies that minimize health and social risks throughout the population.
- Promotes outreach and linkage to services.
- Encourages partnership among service providers.

In order to play this new role effectively, public health agencies and employees are attempting to revitalize their work and their commitments to the state's communities. Oregon Turning Point provides the opportunity for a public health system "makeover," revisiting its relevance and effectiveness as we enter the 21st Century.

This revitalization marks a turning point for the public health system in Oregon. It marks a movement away from a financially driven service system to one that is aimed at meeting the needs of individuals and communities within a framework of fiscal and outcome accountability. It calls for unprecedented levels of collaboration between agencies and organizations and it asks these entities to meet the challenges of a vastly changing social world.

Public health fulfills its responsibility in assuring conditions that promote health through the core functions of **ASSESSMENT, ASSURANCE, and POLICY DEVELOPMENT.**

ASSESSMENT=

Collecting and analyzing information relevant to community health status and community health needs.

ASSURANCE=

Ensuring quality health care services are available to all.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT=

Includes informing and mobilizing individuals and communities to identify and solve health problems.

The Turning Point planning process provided the opportunity to re-envision public health in Oregon. Beginning in 1998, the project has worked to develop a model public health plan. The Oregon Health Division provided project management, supporting a broad-based Steering Committee that provided leadership for the project and guided the process. After inviting participation from health-related organizations and agencies throughout the state, Steering Committee members worked with over 100 people to create strategies to transform Oregon's public health system.

**THE TURNING POINT
WORKGROUPS PROVIDED
RECOMMENDATIONS AROUND
FIVE KEY PROJECT OBJECTIVES:**

- 1.** Defining the roles and responsibilities of the public health system and the private provider system in the provision of individual health care and population-based health services.
- 2.** Assessing how public and private organizations can establish and improve collaborative relationships that promote our vision of public health in the 21st Century.
- 3.** Examining the organizational structure of the state and local public health system based on redefined roles and responsibilities, identify strengths and weaknesses, and develop strategies to improve effectiveness.
- 4.** Determining the capacity of the state and local public health system to support defined roles and responsibilities, identify deficiencies, and develop strategies to address those deficiencies.
- 5.** Identifying and securing adequate funding to implement and maintain the proposed changes.

“Part of any good planning process is re-visiting goals and strategies periodically to assess their relevance and effectiveness.”

—GOVERNOR JOHN KITZHABER, MD

**PROMOTE A VISION OF A
NEW ROLE FOR PUBLIC HEALTH**

- Clearly define the role of the public health system.
- Support a major communication strategy to “make the case for the mission and role of public health.”
- Develop a communication strategy that markets the “investment value” of public health.

**ASSURE BASIC PUBLIC HEALTH
CAPACITY AT THE LOCAL LEVEL**

- Establish capacity standards for local governmental public health functions.
- Establish stable state funding for basic local level public health capacity.
- Establish minimum expected local level resources to support and enhance basic public health capacity to meet community needs.
- Create a meaningful system of accountability to assure achievement of basic capacity at the local level.

**CHANGE FROM A FUNDING-
DRIVEN SYSTEM TO A
NEEDS-DRIVEN SYSTEM**

- Explore ways to use currently received federal categorical funding to achieve new role.
- Advocate for federal funding for basic public health capacity.
- Increase advocacy and negotiation efforts at the federal level to allow flexible funding to meet community needs.
- Explore use of private non-profit public health foundation to receive and distribute funds.
- Explore having health care purchasers pay for basic public health services.

**INCREASE THE INFLUENCE OF
PUBLIC HEALTH LEADERSHIP**

- Increase the leadership skills of the public health work force.
- Increase the visibility of public health leaders at the state and local levels.
- Include all the contributors to the public health system (state, local, federal, community, and private sector) in all public health planning efforts.
- Develop community leaders for public health.

**ASSURE BASIC PUBLIC HEALTH
CAPACITY AT THE STATE LEVEL**

- Establish capacity standards for state governmental public health functions.
- Create a stable funding method for basic state level public health capacity.
- Create a meaningful system of accountability to assure achievement of basic capacity at the state level.

**DEVELOP A DIVERSE WORK
FORCE TO ACHIEVE A NEW ROLE
FOR PUBLIC HEALTH**

- Implement a statewide training effort for the current public health work force focused on skills and education to address changing public health roles.
- Enhance linkages between the academic and practice settings to encourage joint recruitment of students into placements, internships and the public health work force.
- Infuse public health principles into basic health profession education curricula.

An effective Oregon public health system will focus on creating conditions that allow our communities to be healthy. One strategy emerges as critical to the success of the Turning Point plan for public health transformation. Introducing a needs-driven system and abandoning a funding-driven system will provide the foundation for creating a public health system that has the capability to address the basic factors that affect health. The new system will be strength-based and community-driven, based on identified needs rather than politics, available funding, or federal health priorities. This system marks a movement away from a financially driven service system to one that is primarily aimed at meeting the needs of individuals and communities within a framework of fiscal and outcome accountability.

OUR NEW PUBLIC HEALTH SYSTEM NEEDS TO EMBRACE THE FOLLOWING CHARACTERISTICS:

- Awareness of community needs and resources.
- Ability and commitment to address the unique needs of communities.
- Measures of success that address the basic factors that support a community's health.
- Measurement of service delivery that is based on performance.

Policymakers are crucial partners in the transformation of public health in Oregon. New statutes and administrative rules will provide the foundation and framework necessary to sustain the revitalized public health system. In addition to policy change, transformation of the current system requires the following:

- Promoting broad-based support for envisioned new role of public health.
- Engaging people in innovative partnerships committed to transforming the vision into reality.
- Developing a state level foundation and structure for implementing a public health system responsive to community needs.
- Developing local level foundations and structures for implementing a public health system responsive to community needs.

Transformation of the public health system will support communities taking action to promote and preserve the health of the people of Oregon. This success will result in enhanced quality of life for Oregonians during the 21st Century and leadership in the country's public health efforts.

“The public health system, from national to state and local levels, must.... move beyond capably providing services to aggressively advocating and building constituencies for efforts that target the most important of the traditional health risk factors and that promote social policies that both minimize and equalize risks throughout the population. These represent a new job description for public health.”

—BERNARD J. TURNOCK, *Public Health: What It Is and How It Works*



Turning Point
Department of Human Services
Oregon Health Division
800 NE Oregon Street, Suite 930
Portland, Oregon 97232

The complete Public Health Improvement Plan is available on our Web site:
www.ohd.hr.state.or.us

This publication was supported by a grant from The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

If you would like this information in an alternate format, contact:
Pam Judd, Turning Point Program
phone: (503) 731.4017
TTY-nonvoice: (503) 731.4031