

New Mexico's Health Councils - Investing in a Healthy Future

Supporting Health for New Mexico



New Mexico Alliance of Health Councils advocates for increased funding for County and Tribal Health Councils to adequately fulfill their roles.

Since 1991, health councils have played a crucial role in New Mexico's 33 counties and in 6 tribal communities.

Health councils serve at the center of local public health systems, accomplishing systemic outcomes resulting in improved health status. They provide a core component of New Mexico's public health system.

Assessment

Assessing and monitoring local community health needs and priorities, using up-to-date state and local data.

Health Planning

Developing Community Health Improvement Plans, with broad community input and engagement.

Coordination

- Monitoring local programs and services to identify gaps and reduce duplication.
- Providing a channel of communication between communities, providers and state and local government.

Action

- Programs, services, and community initiatives.
- Partnerships and coalitions to address specific issues and priorities.
- Policies: Working with public and private sectors to develop policies that improve health.
- Resources: Leveraging millions of dollars.



Why Health Councils?

New Mexico's centralized Department of Health (DOH) is served by a strong system of independent county and tribal health councils which do community based planning and coordination, especially in rural areas.

- Health councils increase the efficiency and effectiveness of local services. DOH cites them as a part of the essential infrastructure for engaging communities in the public health system.
- Health councils help DOH meet the requirements and standards for national public health accreditation.
- Health councils help to address the state's priority of improving the health care work force.
- Health councils leverage resources —\$4 for every \$1 provided by core state funding.*
- Many state agencies and statewide coalitions depend on the health councils as channels for communication and collaboration, and dissemination with New Mexico communities.

Investing in health councils strengthens our communities, our economy, and our health outcomes.

What has changed

Structure: The original 1991 County Maternal and Child Health Plan Act does not reflect the current comprehensive role that health councils play in addressing the needs of their broader communities.

Funding: Funding was cut in 2010, so health councils are functioning at a fraction of their capacity.

What is needed

Restoration of funding for health councils through the legislative process so that they can grow their capacity to address the state's health needs.

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* A 2003 study (Community Health Consulting Group, Santa Fe, NM) which tracked health councils' impact over three years.