

# 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.