

Healthier People, Thriving Communities:

# Our Vision for Tennessee

Annual Report 2017



Department of  
**Health**



My Fellow Tennesseans,

I am pleased to share the “Healthier People, Thriving Communities: Our Vision for Tennessee” 2017 Annual Report from the Tennessee Department of Health which describes some of the most significant efforts and achievements made over the past year to fulfill our organization’s mission. From the extraordinary response to protect and recover from wildfires in east Tennessee to activities such as dental screening and treatment for children in middle Tennessee and physical activity programs in west Tennessee communities, we provide an impressive range and impact of services.

I must also acknowledge the dedication and commitment of the public health professionals who work to ensure optimal health and vibrant communities for all people in Tennessee. Coordination with partners at local, regional, state and national levels enables us to serve people more effectively and to help them get better results. Using tools such as the Baldrige Framework for Performance Excellence has helped us to examine our processes and improve our results.

I am proud of the progress we are making in some areas such as increases in breastfeeding rates and safe sleep practices which protect babies and reductions in tuberculosis cases in the state. Yet in other areas, there is still much work to be done. For example, the number of deaths and overdoses from misuse of prescription painkillers continues to rise and new methods of nicotine delivery raise concerns about increases in lung diseases and cancers. I am convinced we cannot treat our way out of these problems; instead, we must focus on primary prevention efforts which prevent the conditions from occurring in the first place.

I hope this report will not only inform you, but will also inspire you to get involved. Each of us can take steps to lead healthier lifestyles, and we can engage with others in our families, our schools, our workplaces, our places of worship and our communities so that together, we will ensure optimal health and vibrant communities for everyone in Tennessee.

**John Dreyzehner, MD, MPH, FACOEM**  
**Commissioner, Tennessee Department of Health**

## Our Mission

To protect, promote and improve the health and prosperity of people in Tennessee.

## Our Vision

To be a recognized and trusted leader, partnering and engaging to accelerate Tennessee to one of the nation's ten healthiest states.

## Our Values

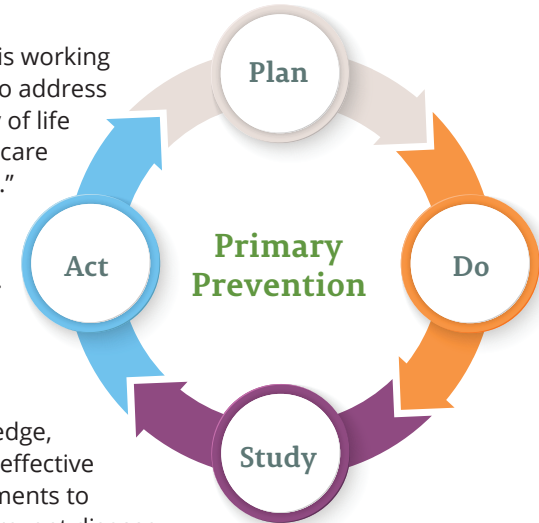
- Teamwork
- Integrity
- Mutual Respect
- Excellence
- Compassion
- Servant Leadership

# Primary Prevention and Performance Excellence

The Tennessee Department of Health is working to prevent disease before it can start to address the chronic diseases that lower quality of life and drive much of Tennessee's health care costs. We call this "primary prevention." Primary prevention occurs not only in health care settings, but in spaces and places that shape our health the most. For example, preventing smoking among teens will likely prevent lung cancer later in their lives.

A combination of coordination, knowledge, learning and relationships is the most effective way to change behaviors and environments to achieve primary prevention. To help prevent disease, the Tennessee Department of Health uses the Baldrige Framework for Performance Excellence as an approach to plan, do, study and act in ways that continually improve our performance over time.

By bringing these two concepts together, we have forged **the TDH Way: Primary prevention is what we do. Performance excellence is how we do it.**



# Who We Are

## Tennessee's Public Health Workforce

**The Tennessee Department of Health employs 3,234 people** who work in state, regional and local facilities in each of the 95 counties across the state. In addition to personnel housed at four state-level facilities, seven regional health offices and the 89 county health departments who report to the Commissioner of Health, **other members of the public health workforce are employed by their local governments including those who work in the six metropolitan health departments:** Hamilton County, Knox County, Madison County, Davidson County, Shelby County and Sullivan County.

**TDH has partnered with each of Tennessee's five accredited schools of public health to build public health competency and recently began offering matching funds for employees pursuing relevant educational opportunities to ensure our ability to recruit and retain a diverse and highly-qualified public health workforce throughout the state.** In partnership with institutions of higher education, local, regional and state public health departments offered training opportunities through 83 internships and five fellowships in 2016 and 2017.

Approximately **5,000 individuals volunteer their services** to meet public health needs each year, lending their time and expertise as members of the Medical Reserve Corps which responds during times of disaster, or as members of one of the 95 county health councils which help assess and address the needs of their local communities.



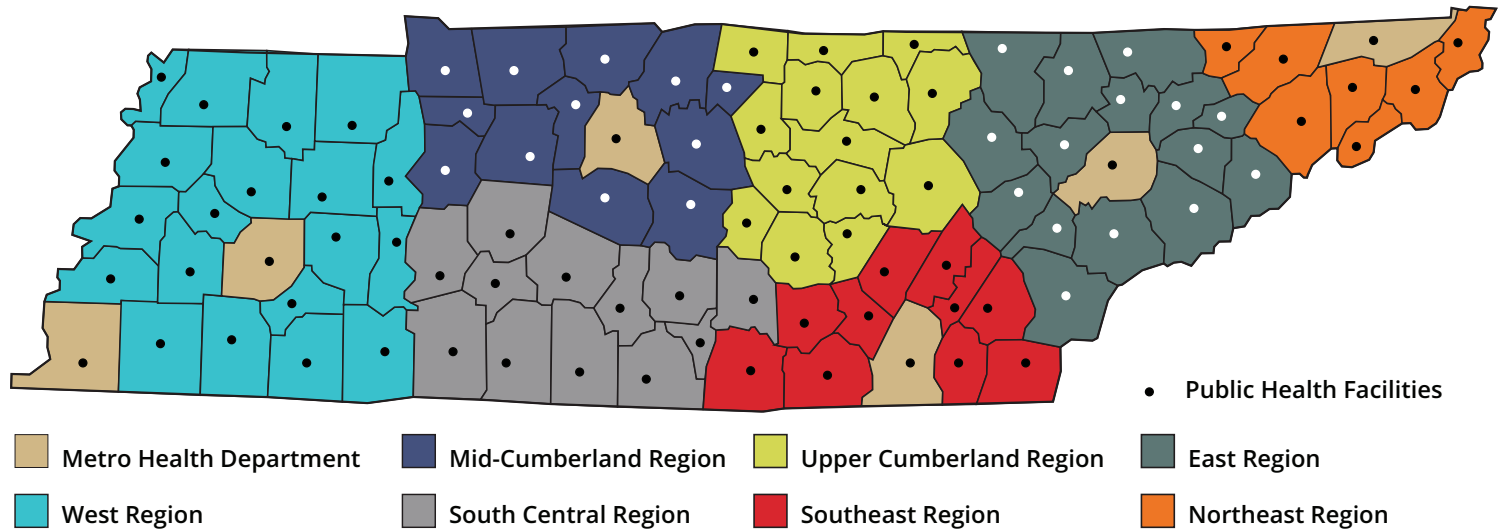
"As a recent college graduate, **being a Commissioner's Fellow has given me a great diversity of work experiences.** I wanted to learn how a state agency like TDH functions to provide services throughout its communities. I've assisted on both epidemiological and administrative projects within the department, so I have been able to see the direct impact that TDH is making. **I hope to continue working on public health at the state or local level."**

— **Brendan Burns**

*2016-2017 Commissioner's Fellow from Raleigh, NC*



## Public Health Regional Offices And Health Departments



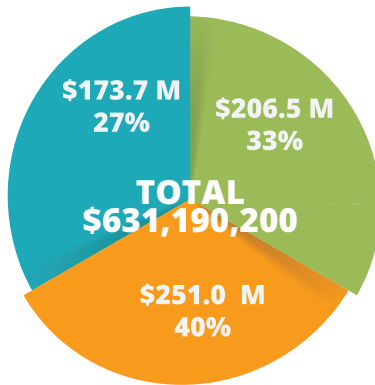
The Tennessee Department of Health operates 126 facilities, including public health departments in 89 of Tennessee's 95 counties, as well as two state labs, seven regional health offices, two administrative offices and several health clinics. Six regional "metro" health departments are also part of the state's public health enterprise, as a function of their respective local government but collaborating closely with state, regional and local health departments.

# Who We Are

## Funding

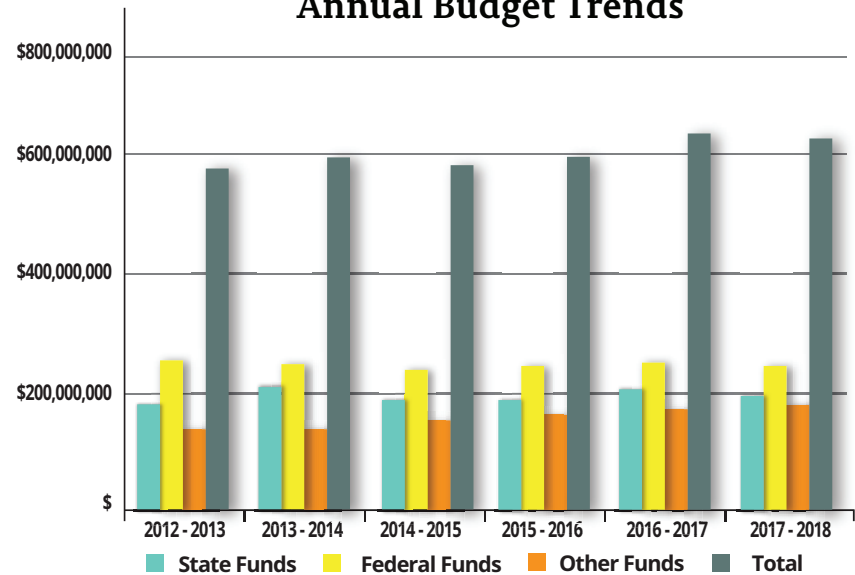
The Tennessee Department of Health is committed to being a good steward of the human and financial resources entrusted to us. Tennessee's constitution requires that all public spending be approved by the Tennessee General Assembly, and also requires a balanced budget under which spending cannot exceed the state's collections and reserves for the fiscal year beginning July 1 and ending June 30 of each year.

Funding for the Tennessee Department of Health comes from three sources: federal agencies, state government and other entities such as private foundations which provide grants and individuals who pay fees for services such as health professional licensure, lab tests or copies of birth certificates.



STATE FEDERAL OTHER

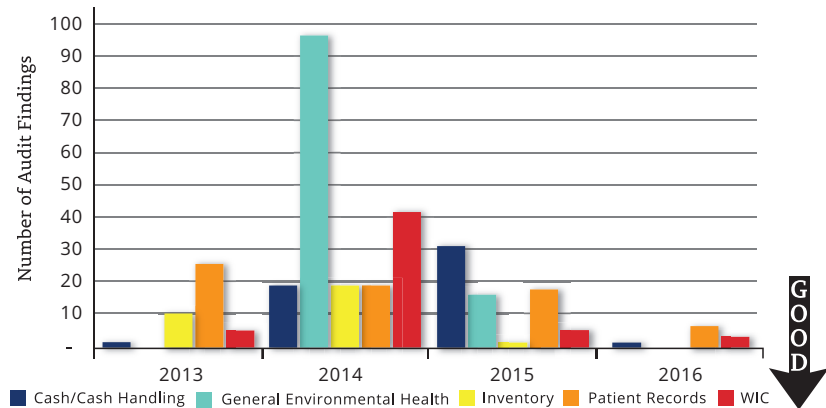
## Annual Budget Trends



Funds are used for the following:

- The total budget for the Tennessee Department of Health has increased slightly from \$613,711,600 in 2010 to \$631,190,200 in fiscal year 2017.
- The largest budget item is personnel costs for salary, benefits and training for 3,021 full-time and 213 part-time employees located across the state in FY 2017.
- Approximately 11 percent of the funds are used for “indirect” administrative overhead costs including utilities, equipment and supplies for local health departments and clinics, state labs and administrative office buildings..
- Approximately \$225 million is awarded through contracts and grants to other organizations including metro health departments, community and faith-based organizations, health care service providers and other government agencies to plan, carry out and evaluate essential public health services.

## Audit Findings in County Health Department



*Despite a temporary increase in 2014 for Environmental Health, due to a change in policy, the number of overall audit findings has decreased significantly, reflecting improved processes and effectiveness.*



“The grant for \$10,000 from the Tennessee Department of Health was the catalyst needed as ‘seed money’ for a playground equipment project for Metro / Lynchburg Moore County Park. With these matching funds, Metro Moore Government obtained other funding to purchase additional playground equipment. Metro Moore Government supplied funding to complete the project. As a result, **Moore County families will be enjoying more opportunities for physical activity.**”

— Sloan Stewart

Metropolitan Mayor, Metropolitan Moore County



# What We Do

## Our Services

The Tennessee Department of Health offers a variety of programs and services impacting every person in the state, either directly or indirectly to fulfill our mission to protect, promote and improve the health and prosperity of people in Tennessee.

### Preventive and Primary Care Services for one in six Tennesseans annually



1.7 million visits by 746,000 individuals to local health departments



68,000 dental screenings performed; dental sealants applied to 48,000 school children



\$112.6 million spent in local grocery stores for nutritious foods by participants in the Women, Infants and Children supplemental nutrition program



189,000 primary care service visits by 91,000 different patients



478,000 immunizations administered



Special services provided for 4,997 children with special needs



1.6 million lab tests performed



214,000 individuals registered for new vital records and 733,000 records issued

**Direct Services Benefit 1.1 Million Individuals in Tennessee**



## Awareness and Education to Promote Healthy Choices and Access to Health Services



Outreach to 631,469 individuals to provide information about TennCare eligibility requirements resulted in enrollment of 15,207 pregnant women eligible for TennCare and CoverKids benefits.

## Licensing, Inspection and Enforcement of Professional Requirements



284,000 licenses issued to health professionals by various boards



2,061 investigations of complaints filed against health professionals



5,226 inspections of health care facilities including 1,761 ambulances



2,677 investigations of complaints filed against health care facilities



113,000 inspections of 42,000 permitted establishments (restaurants, hotels, etc.)

## Collection, Monitoring and Reporting of Data to Protect against Disease



12,724 clinicians from 4,534 facilities shared information about 11,465,743 immunizations to one of the 6,570,999 individuals with records in the Tennessee Immunization Information System



The Tennessee Cancer Registry contains records for 1,049,927 cancers diagnosed in 968,931 unique individuals



**Indirect Services Benefit all 6.5 Million People in Tennessee**

# What We Do

## Our Mission, Vision and Structure

Tennessee Department of Health divisions, offices and programs interact with each other and partner with other public, private and non-profit entities.

### Organizational Structure



People of TN



Governor of TN



Health Commissioner



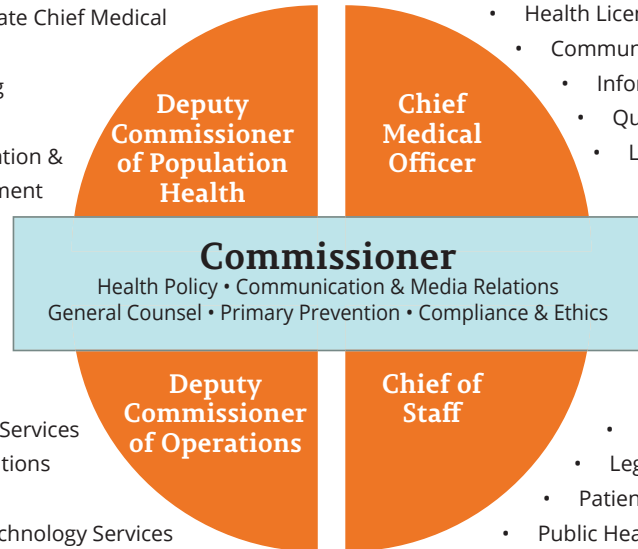
Tennessee Department of Health

- Family Health & Wellness
- Health Disparities
- Office of the State Chief Medical Examiner
- Policy, Planning & Assessment
- Grant Coordination & Strategic Alignment

- Administrative Services
- Workforce Solutions & Services
- Information Technology Services

- Communicable & Environmental Disease and Emergency Preparedness
- Health Licensure & Regulation
- Community Health Services
  - Informatics & Analytics
  - Quality Improvement
  - Laboratory Services

- Health Planning
- Legislative Services
- Patient Care Advocacy
- Public Health Competency



The Tennessee Department of Health emphasizes primary prevention of the “big four” factors contributing to the leading causes of death and disease in the state to advance our vision of being a trusted and respected leader, partnering and engaging to accelerate Tennessee to one of the nation’s ten healthiest states.

## Tennessee’s Big Four



People who are  
Physically Inactive

**30.4%**

of adults spend fewer than  
30 minutes / week physically  
active outside of work



People with  
Obesity

**33.8%**

of adults are  
overweight or obese



Tobacco and  
Nicotine Addiction

**21.9%**

of adults use  
nicotine products



Other Substance  
Use Disorders

**18.3%**

of deaths related  
to substance abuse

# Accomplishments

## Measuring Our Progress



## Tobacco and Nicotine Addiction

In 2016, each of Tennessee's 95 counties completed community health improvement plans to address tobacco use and \$6.5 million in state tobacco settlement funding was invested to support local and statewide projects. As a result of these and other efforts, **the percentage of adults in Tennessee who smoke decreased from 24 percent in 2016 to 22 percent in 2017, reducing tobacco-related expenses an estimated \$1.1 million in average lifetime costs per smoker in Tennessee to individuals and communities.**

**Baby and Me Tobacco-Free provided diaper vouchers to 867 pregnant women who demonstrated abstinence from smoking, during pregnancy, reducing the risks of babies born with low birth-weights by 55 percent and saving an estimated \$5.69 million in hospital charges** (the average cost for low birth-weight is \$32,672 more than for a baby born at normal weight). Referrals to the QuitLine increased 38 percent from 2016 to 2017, and enrollment in the QuitLine program increased 35 percent in that time, due in part to the participation of 50 partner organizations in the Second Annual "It's Quitting Time in Tennessee" campaign and proclamation of Tennessee Quit Week in February 2017.

In July 2016, **400 teens representing 51 of Tennessee's counties met at the "Free and Clear Tennessee" or FACT Summit to envision and create a youth-led movement of peer-to-peer education and advocacy for tobacco-free lifestyles** which they named #TNSTRONG for "Tennessee Stop Tobacco and Revolutionize Our New Generation." They received training and learned strategies from nationally-recognized experts and model programs elsewhere and elected Tennessee's first group of Teen Tobacco-Free Ambassadors, who now lead their peers in prevention activities across the state.



"I started smoking at the age of 14. **The Baby and Me Tobacco-Free program gave me the incentive to quit, and to continue with it.** I feel healthier, and my kids aren't inhaling smoke so that makes them healthier as well."

— **Carolyn Driggers** Program participant

"Reading the information on the website and hearing the #UNSMOKEABLE campaign gave me the courage to try to quit smoking."

— **Sullivan County Student**





## People with Obesity

Good eating habits formed early in life are an important factor in health. The Tennessee Department of Health supports access to healthy foods through several programs:

The Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) served an average of 142,000 participants monthly in 2016 and published an online nutrition education program in both English and Spanish.

The benefits of breastfeeding were promoted through the Tennessee Breastfeeding Hotline, which averaged more than 500 calls per month; the Breastfeeding Welcomed Here Campaign, through which an additional 319 businesses pledged support for breastfeeding in their establishments; and collaboration with Tennessee hospitals to educate new parents about breastfeeding, safe sleep practices and early delivery risks through the BEST for Babies program. The percentage of infants participating in WIC in Tennessee being breastfed at six months (42.5 percent) and 12 months (24.7 percent) has increased steadily from 2012 to 2016.

In partnership with the University of Tennessee Extension Services, local health departments offer nutrition education classes and counseling to help people prevent and manage diabetes. Funding awarded in 2016 through Project Diabetes and Access to Health through Built Environment grants has supported schools and programs serving youth and seniors to offer community gardening programs, cooking classes and vouchers for purchases at local farmer's markets, while other partners have used these funds to install water bottle filling stations at schools, parks and playgrounds, offering alternatives to sugar-sweetened beverages.

Among participants in our East Region's pilot microclinics, 73.1 percent of adults and 81.8 percent of youth lost weight during the 16-session program sponsored by BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee.



*The statewide prevalence of overweight or obese students in kindergarten through 8th grade has decreased from 41.1 during the 2007-08 school year to 38.4 to in 2015-16, with rates for school districts ranging from 15.6 percent to 60.2 percent. In 2016, over 40 percent of students in Tennessee and one in three adults were overweight or obese.*

# Accomplishments

## Measuring Our Progress



## People who are Physically Inactive

**Toolkits and funding for more than 100 physical activity clubs across the state support safe and structured environments** for young people to walk, run, bike or hike, regardless of athletic ability.



A total of 915 individuals and 89 teams participated in the 2016 Highlands Fitness Challenge, a partnership between the Upper Cumberland Regional Health Office, four county Chambers of Commerce, businesses and other community leaders. Over the course of the two-month program, 42 percent of participants achieved their goals to be physically active at least 30 minutes five days per week.



**“The running club had an impact: it helped with their self-esteem, confidence and attitude** because they were being so successful at something they really enjoyed.”

— **Nastassia Taylor**  
Director of Educational Services,  
Boys & Girls Club of Greater Kingsport



“Heart disease runs in my family, and **I want to prolong my life and show my children how important exercise is.**”

— **Cassie Hall** 2nd place individual winner in the Highlands Fitness Challenge





## Other Substance Use Disorders

Tennessee is facing an epidemic of prescription drug overdose and addiction. To combat substance misuse and abuse, **the Tennessee Department of Health works closely with partners at local, state and national levels to educate clinicians and patients about the potential risks and treatment alternatives to painkillers.**

To improve the understanding of the problem, the Tennessee Department of Health developed the Controlled Substance Monitoring Database, which records prescriptions for controlled substances and enables providers to check before prescribing to determine whether other prescriptions for the patient might result in the potential for overdose. More than 40,000 clinicians are registered to report and check prescriptions in this system, checking more than 6.5 million patient records and decreasing the number of opioids dispensed by more than 14 percent from 2012 to 2015.

The Tennessee Drug Overdose Dashboard, an online dashboard recently published, shows that in 2016, 7.6 million prescriptions were written and dispensed for painkillers in Tennessee, more than one for every resident of the state. In 2016, 1,186 people died in Tennessee from an opioid overdose; 260 of those were heroin overdoses.

- Clinical protocols for opioid prescribers were developed and shared with clinicians throughout the state to reduce the number of opioid prescriptions.
- Through partnership with local health departments, pharmacies and law enforcement agencies, anti-drug coalitions hosted educational campaigns and drug take back events through the “Count It, Lock It, Drop It” program. More than 250,000 pounds of medication were collected in the first six months of 2017.
- To reduce the number of infants born with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome, local health departments provide information and planning services to educate women of childbearing age on use of voluntary, reversible, long-acting contraceptives while they are taking medications which could place their unborn children at risk. Nearly 80 percent of Tennessee babies born with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome are born to mothers taking at least one substance legally prescribed to them that contributed to their children’s condition.

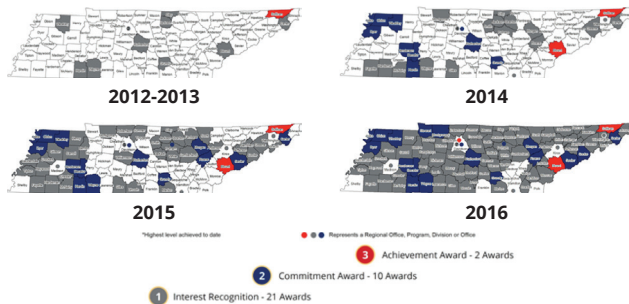
# Accomplishments

## Recognitions

In 2011, the Tennessee Department of Health adopted the Baldrige Framework for Performance Excellence to help improve the services we provide and the results we achieve. Since then, the Tennessee Center for Performance Excellence awarded Level 1 recognition to the agency in 2012, Level 2 recognition in 2014 and Level 3 recognition in 2016. 99 public health teams across the state have also been recognized for their commitment to achievement of performance excellence.

### Accelerating Excellence

Through the Use of the Baldrige Excellence Framework







ASSOCIATION OF STATE AND TERRITORIAL HEALTH OFFICIALS

The Tennessee Department of Health has received ASTHO's highest recognition, its Vision Award, for the past three years.

**2015**

*Tennessee's Innovate to Accelerate: Achieving Excellence in Public Health Program*

**2016**

*The Safe Sleep Hospital Project*

**2017**

*Tennessee's Tobacco Settlement Program*

Our commitment to performance excellence and customer-focused government services is demonstrated by the recipients of the **Governor's Excellence in Service Awards in 2016 and 2017.**



**Helen Allen**  
Public Health Office Supervisor  
Jackson County  
Health Department



**Joey Smith**  
Director  
Montgomery County  
Health Department



**Rhonda Edens**  
Deputy Registrar  
Washington County  
Health Department

# Accomplishments

## Measuring Our Progress

**A core function of the Tennessee Department of Health is to protect people's health in emergency situations** including natural disasters and disease outbreaks. Emergency preparedness and rapid response require effective coordination of planning, training and communication among multiple organizations by professional staff members and volunteers.

When a massive wildfire spread from the Great Smoky Mountains National Park to nearby tourist resorts and communities in Sevier County, **staff members at the East Tennessee Regional Health Office responded to urgent requests to assist the more than 18,000 people who were evacuated**, more than 3,000 of those to emergency shelters. For more than two weeks, **89 public health employees worked around the clock to provide vaccines to firefighters and emergency medical responders and medical support for evacuees housed at several emergency shelters.** Public health personnel from Knoxville, Nashville and Jackson brought equipment and people to replace telephone, radio and internet services disrupted by the fires, supporting communication between ambulances, hospitals and the Gatlinburg Command Center. Other employees assisted the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, Tennessee Bureau of Investigation and American Red Cross to account for every missing person and conducted testing to ensure safe food and drinking water, enabling 173 local restaurants to reopen quickly to serve customers in need, thereby reducing the loss of revenue and jobs.



**The staff of the Tennessee Department of Health were instrumental in helping to mitigate this disaster.**

Their quick deployment, along with the communication support from the Mobile Operations Center, were vital to all of the operations for the next several days. This program was beneficial to the command staff, the first responders and to the residents and visitors of our area. We greatly appreciate the willingness to respond and to provide these valuable resources during our tragic time of need."

— **Greg Miller** Fire Chief, City of Gatlinburg



In addition to natural disasters, **the Tennessee Department of Health works to prevent, detect and stop the spread of contagious diseases.** While vaccinations are a very effective and inexpensive way to prevent common diseases such as influenza and pneumonia, outbreaks can occur if people do not receive these immunizations. For some deadly diseases which have only recently become a threat such as Ebola and Zika virus disease, effective vaccines have not yet been developed; other protective measures are taken, such as mosquito abatement programs as well as quarantines and testing of people who may have had contact with others diagnosed with the disease.

When two initial cases of measles were reported in Shelby County in April 2016, public health officials immediately began the important work of “contract tracing” to identify anyone who may have come into contact with people diagnosed with measles, making them aware of symptoms to watch for and providing information on why and where to get tested, vaccinated or treated. Seven individuals were diagnosed with measles and 934 people in 67 different public locations were exposed to the disease. Health officials quarantined and monitored 36 people and 385 vaccines were administered to people who had not previously been immunized.



As a department and a community, we are grateful for the multi-faceted response which the Tennessee Department of Health provided during the wildfires. The **support from the Tennessee Office of Vital Records to reproduce all the personal birth, marriage, divorce and death records needed for the fire victims was an important first step of the rebuilding process.**

— **John Matthews**

*Sevier County Emergency Management Agency*

“I am pleased with the coordinated effort of the Shelby County Health Department and the many community partners, including **the Tennessee Department of Health** and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, who **spent countless hours over the last two months protecting everyone and helping to keep citizens safe.**”

— **Mark H. Luttrell, Jr.**

*Shelby County Mayor*



# Accomplishments

## Measuring Our Progress

In every county, **the Tennessee Department of Health provides information, services and funding for partners, promoting optimal health for all across the lifespan**, including family planning services, prenatal care, newborn screening, coordination of care for children with special needs, injury and violence prevention, chronic disease prevention and control and healthy aging.

As an important part of the effort to prevent cancer and lung disease, tobacco cessation programs have helped pregnant women, teens and adults stop using nicotine products including electronic nicotine delivery systems for vaping.



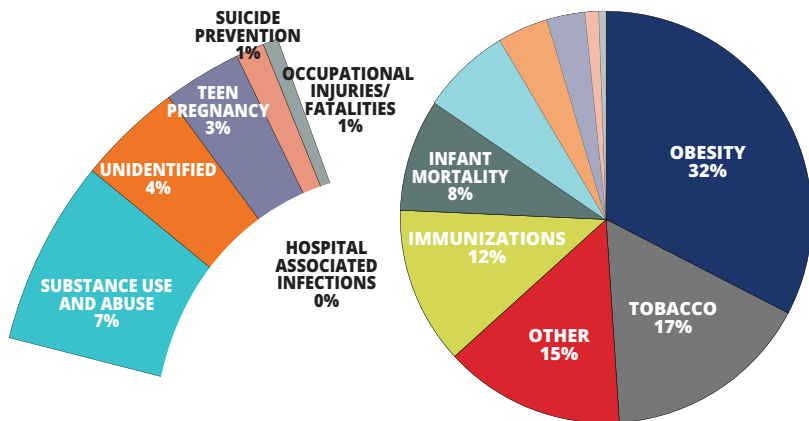
- **22,729 calls to the Tennessee Tobacco QuitLine between July 2014 and December 2016 resulted in 8,146 people receiving tobacco cessation support**
- In the 92 counties with Baby & Me Tobacco-Free programs to help pregnant women quit smoking, **5,144 mothers enrolled and 31.3 percent completed the program and quit smoking between April 2015 to December 2016**
- Funding from **the Tennessee Department of Health provided signage to designate tobacco-free walking trails** at several Tennessee Welcome Centers, earning the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development recognition for their work to improve health of employees and visitors

With one or more facilities in each of Tennessee's 95 counties, **personnel at county and regional health departments serve as respected leaders and champions for health in their local communities.** The Tennessee Department of Health encourages each member of the workforce to dedicate up to five paid work hours per month on a locally-led primary prevention initiative or "PPI" project to lend expertise and support for local initiatives that promote individual and community health. **Since 2013, more than 3,000 local and regional employees (92 percent) have contributed time, expertise and resources to at least one of more than 2,800 PPI projects** with a wide variety of activities such as reading and mentoring programs for young children, pool safety classes, health screening events and "marathon in a month" walking programs.

Health department employees and volunteers with local health councils have participated in and led local Healthier Tennessee community coalitions working with schools, businesses and faith-based organizations to promote healthier lifestyle choices.



### PPI Projects by Topic Area



# Accomplishments

## Measuring Our Progress

The Tennessee Department of Health is entrusted with data provided by individuals, health care service providers and other organizations, which is important to understand health risks and improve health outcomes. As stewards of data, **we must assure privacy and confidentiality of information while making complete, accurate and timely data available for authorized users** in standards-based formats. Recent upgrades to information technology systems and processes help improve our ability to comply with requirements while meeting customer expectations, including an online data request form and a listing of data that can be made available for public use: [www.tn.gov/health/section/statistics](http://www.tn.gov/health/section/statistics).

Tennessee's Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System and Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System collect data through phone surveys given to randomly-selected adults, providing information that helps identify high-risk populations and risk behaviors and to guide strategy and allocation of resources for interventions.

Health care providers are required by state and federal law to report cases of infectious diseases such as tuberculosis, HIV and influenza. Health care providers also report certain conditions such as birth defects and cancers and procedures such as immunizations. The Tennessee Department of Health maintains and analyzes this information to identify disease outbreaks, disparities among populations and effectiveness of services and programs.



***The Tennessee Cancer Registry has received the highest level of certification by the North American Association of Central Cancer Registries (NAACCR) every year since 2005 and is recognized as a national leader.***

The data collected by the Tennessee Department of Health inform planning and allocation of resources, helping identify and address disparities arising from age, race, gender, place and other “social determinants of health” such as unemployment, household income, educational attainment, neighborhood crime rates, etc. By examining the data to understand differences in health outcomes including infant mortality, teen pregnancy, death and disability due to chronic diseases and drug overdoses for diverse populations, health professionals are better able to prevent death, disease or injury for the most vulnerable people. **The Tennessee Department of Health has worked to reduce some of the greatest disparities which currently exist in Tennessee.**

*African-American women are more likely than women of other races to die from breast cancer, which is closely related to obesity. Outreach through faith-based organizations to promote healthy eating and physical activity and funding to support breast and cervical cancer screenings is helping increase awareness and access to services, particularly in communities with larger minority populations.*

*White males between the ages of 35 and 50 are the most at risk for drug abuse and suicide. Promotion of clinical protocols for prescribing painkillers and collaboration with substance abuse coalitions in communities with high rates of opioid prescriptions, overdoses and deaths has reduced the amount of painkillers prescribed between 2011 and 2015 by more than 29 percent.*

Access to health through prevention and treatment services is also a factor which influences disparities in health outcomes.

- 61 of Tennessee’s 95 counties are designated wholly or partially as “health professional shortage areas” for primary care.
- 93 of Tennessee’s 95 counties are designated as “health professional shortage areas” for dental care.
- 90 of Tennessee’s 95 counties are designated as “health professional shortage areas for mental health.

In 2016, technical assistance and funding assisted hospitals, clinicians and other partners in underserved communities:

- \$12.5 million to 102 health care “safety net” providers
- Approximately \$4 million to more than 150 clinical practitioners serving in shortage areas
- \$694,420 to 39 small rural hospitals to improve quality and financial sustainability

# Accomplishments

## Improving Our Services

The Tennessee Department of Health has invested to provide services in a more cost-effective, user-friendly manner as part of Governor Bill Haslam's Customer-Focused Government initiative.

Information technology systems have been replaced or updated in 2016 and 2017, enabling:

- Online Licensure and Renewal System for health professionals and facilities
- Entry and access to vital records, immunization records, opioid prescriptions dispensed and medical examiners' reports
- Electronic medical records for patients receiving services in public health departments and clinics
- Internal communications and collaboration via intranet and SharePoint

**The Tennessee Department of Health contributes its expertise in informatics and analytics to other agencies and organizations,** promoting standards-based technology and terminology to ensure the ability to protect, share and use individual and aggregate data appropriately.



I am very thankful we have a system for putting in immunizations and being able to see what children have already had and what they need next. **This is a very helpful tool for providers and patients.**

— **Health care provider responding to customer satisfaction survey**



***Individual performance goals are set and evaluated annually for each state employee to make sure funds allocated for personnel costs are appropriate.***

***In 2016, approximately one-third of employees at the Tennessee Department of Health were recognized with "advanced" or "outstanding" performance ratings.***



In 2016 and 2017, **the Tennessee Department of Health increasingly emphasized collaboration with partners to “move upstream” toward primary prevention of disease and injury.** Some examples of partnerships include:

- Collaboration with the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to make use of civil monetary penalty funds to improve quality of life and quality of care for individuals in long-term care facilities has provided for eligible projects in Tennessee and has served as a model for other states managing similar funds into which fines for violations of nursing home regulations are paid.
- Collaboration with the Tennessee Hospital Association, the Tennessee Commission on Aging and Disabilities and other partners working to encourage people of all ages to prepare an Advance Directive (commonly known as a “living will”) to prevent unwanted procedures led to the creation of Honoring Choices® Tennessee, a not-for-profit organization aligned with similar initiatives in ten other states. Hospitals and health systems piloted the education and training programs with their employees in 2016, with expertise and funding support from several public and private organizations.
- Collaboration with birthing hospitals to help reduce infant mortality through the BEST for Babies initiative, which promotes breastfeeding, safe sleep practices and reduction of early elective delivery has recognized seven hospitals across the state for meeting targeted goals for education and services.
- Collaboration with local community leaders and officials will be further enhanced by the addition of seven regional healthy development coordinators who will engage in planning and development activities that promote health.

*To fulfill its responsibility for regulatory oversight of health professionals and facilities, the Tennessee Department of Health has worked to clarify guidelines for pain management clinics, resulting in more stringent oversight for inappropriate prescribing of painkillers. Similarly, regulation of massage therapists led to prosecution of businesses and individuals engaged in human trafficking.*

# Goals and Priorities for 2018

Each year, more than 2,000 legislative proposals are brought to the Tennessee General Assembly, many with a potential impact on health. The Tennessee Department of Health tracks between 300 and 400 of those proposals each year and is frequently asked to provide information or data to inform the decision-making process.

The Tennessee General Assembly also requires the Tennessee State Health Plan to be updated annually; in 2016, the legislature also requested an Oral Health Plan. Through an extensive public process, the Tennessee Department of Health collects information and documents strategies to improve health for people in Tennessee by asking these questions:

- Are we creating and improving opportunities for optimal health for all?
- Are we moving upstream?
- Are we learning from or teaching others?

To assess progress, the Tennessee Department of Health works to improve Tennessee's current ranking of 45th among the states for overall health outcomes and is also working to define state-specific measures to be known as "Tennessee's Vital Signs."

The Tennessee Commissioner of Health is accountable to Tennessee Governor Bill Haslam, whose initiative is to ensure Customer-Focused Government. The Tennessee Department of Health also supports efforts to achieve other priority goals including:

- **Health and Welfare**
- **Education**
- **Jobs and Economic Development**
- **Public Safety**
- **Fiscal Strength**



The Tennessee Department of Health is concluding an extensive public engagement process to develop a set of Vital Signs that will provide an assessment of Tennessee's population health at a glance. This process included 12 workshops and thousands of suggested measures. The final set will be no more than 12 representative measures covering these areas ranging across the lifespan:

- Infant Mortality
- Youth Obesity
- Third Grade Reading Level
- Youth Nicotine Use
- Teen Pregnancy
- Physical Inactivity
- Community Water Fluoridation
- Use of Emergency Department for Primary Care
- Frequent Mental Distress
- Drug Overdose
- Median Income
- Built Environment

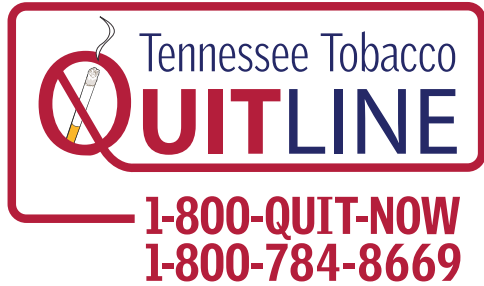
TDH is investing in our workforce and our information technology solutions and continuing efforts to measure and improve our results to support efficient and effective service delivery.

TDH is expanding partnerships with Tennessee's colleges and universities to establish an academic public health department, which will increase training and research opportunities for employees and students to increase public health competency among current and future members of the workforce.

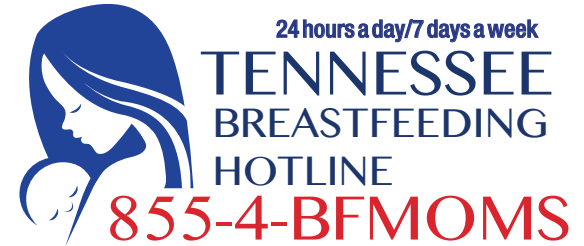
Enhancements to information systems will allow users to access more complete information faster and more easily. Clinicians will be able to enter information electronically for vital records, patient medical records, professional licensure and other information they are required to report, such as birth defects, injuries, infectious diseases or drug overdoses.

TDH will continue its commitment to use the Baldrige Framework for Performance Excellence, pursuing Level 4 recognition at the enterprise level while encouraging and supporting business units to advance their own understanding and use of the framework to improve processes and results.

# Take Charge of Your Health



Visit the Pick Tennessee Products website or your local farmer's market to find fresh fruits and vegetables for healthy meals.



*Use the Healthier Tennessee Small Starts app to track and improve your daily activities*





# Healthy Parks HEALTHY PERSON



"I am under doctor's orders to walk daily for 35 minutes. This is a wonderful program sponsored by the Tennessee State Parks. I have lost 10 pounds and my A1C score has been great. I get to enjoy great times with my daughter-in-law and grandchildren, while getting healthier and making new friends."

— **Betty May Vawter**

*Participant in the Harrison Bay Run Club*



*The Tennessee Department of Health has partnered with Tennessee State Parks on the Healthy Parks Healthy Person program. Use the app to earn rewards from active visits to Tennessee State Parks.*



# Get Involved

**Join with others in your organization and community to help protect, promote and improve health and prosperity for people in Tennessee.** Here are just a few of the ways you can help:

## **As an individual:**

Participate in and support the activities of your local health council, or volunteer to help with a primary prevention activity

## **As an organization:**

Offer a space for mothers to breastfeed and adopt smoke-free policies.

## **As a community:**

Become a Healthier Tennessee community



# Learn More

To learn more about our organization and services or to get involved, please contact us:

**Call: 615-741-3111**

**Email: [TN.Health@tn.gov](mailto:TN.Health@tn.gov)**

**Visit: [www.tn.gov/health](http://www.tn.gov/health)**

Follow us on:





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