

# Public Health: Contributions to a Healthy Nation

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Society of Actuaries Spring  
Health Meeting

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## The Premise

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Public health is a necessary and critical enterprise for the advancement of health; it represents the collection of society's efforts to create conditions for people to be healthy.

## Public Health Contributions Throughout History

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- Focus on epidemics (prior to 1850)
- Emergence of state and local public health agencies (1850-1949)
- Safety net services (1950-1999)
- Response to health threats (post 1999)

## The Public Health Enterprise

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- The mission of public health
  - Promotion
  - Prevention
  - Protection
- The functions of public health
  - Assessment
  - Policy Development
  - Assurance

## The Public Health Enterprise Continued

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- The practice: 10 Essential Public Health Services
  - Monitor health status
  - Diagnose health problems
  - Inform and educate
  - Mobilize communities
  - Develop policies and plans
  - Enforce laws and regulations
  - Link people to needed services
  - Ensure a competent workforce
  - Evaluate effectiveness
  - Conduct research

## The Public Health Enterprise Continued

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- Public Health Competencies
  - Analytic assessment
  - Communication
  - Policy development & program planning
  - Cultural competence
  - Community dimensions of practice
  - Basic public health sciences
  - Financial planning & management skills
  - Leadership & systems thinking

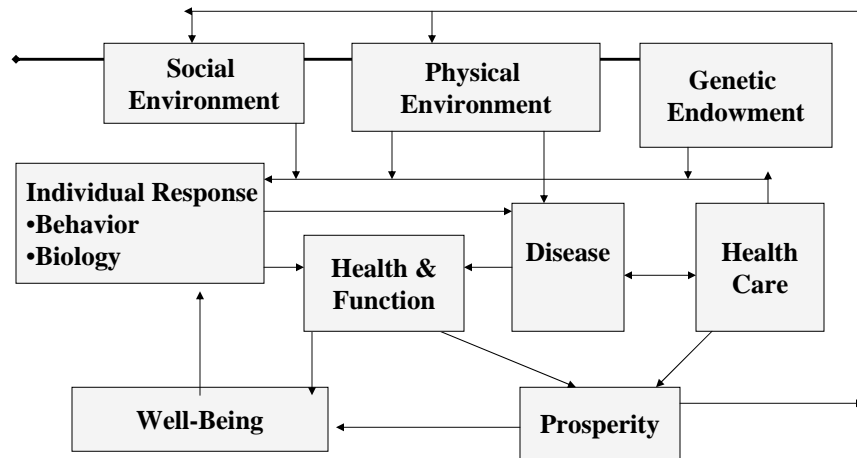
## Focus of Public Health

- Populations at risk (HP 2010: individuals, families, groups, communities, populations)
- Conditions that contribute to health and illness (determinants of health)
- Structures that support health improvement (organizations and infrastructure that enable practice)

## Healthy People 2010: a Population Focus

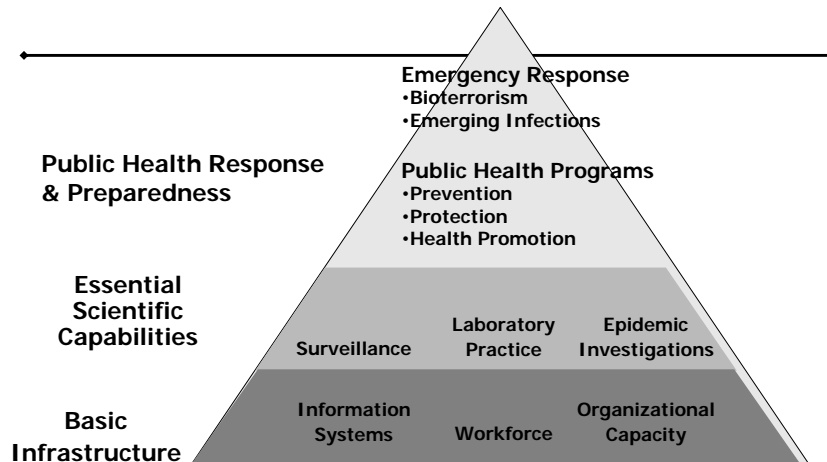


## Conditions: Determinants of Health



Evans & Stoddart (1990)

## Organizations & Structures: Public Health Infrastructure



## Creating a Healthier Nation: Populations at Risk

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- *Healthy People* highlights gaps in meeting our national objectives:
  - Optimizing health of all
  - Prevent and reduce the consequences of chronic diseases such as diabetes, asthma, cardiovascular disease
  - Heightened preparedness for emerging infections and environmental hazards

## Creating a Healthier Nation: Conditions

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- Our health status compared with other developed countries:
  - Leverage efforts at health reform by assuring that the focus is on health improvement
  - Balance investments rationally among factors that influence health; focusing on prevention
  - Advocate for planning and policy efforts that reduce health disparities and unequal healthcare treatment
  - Improve the occupational environment such as workforce skills and competencies; benefits for workers to maintain health, employer participation in health planning

## Creating a Healthier Nation: Organizations and Structures

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- Strengthen the capacity of our public health organizations:
  - Public health accreditation
  - Adapting technological innovation such as the public health version of the electronic medical record
  - Building partnerships among public health, health care, and private sector toward a prevention agenda for health improvement
  - Assure that the media's expression of public health is fully informed
  - Unite public policy officials around opportunities within prevention and the role of public health

## Setting Priorities

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- Strengthen partnerships among *people*
- Opportunities to increase quality and cost effectiveness through *accountability*
- *Sharing* “transforming health” among organizations
- *Leverage* funding opportunities