

# Montana

# TurningPoint

Collaborating for a New Century in Public Health

**A strong public health system is crucial for protecting and improving the health of Americans.**

## Montana's Public Health

Montanans do not have access to a consistent set of public health services across the state. Only half of the state's local public health departments are meeting at least 50% of the standard community services expected of public health systems.

In 2000, Montana had one of the highest percentages of residents without health care coverage and had the lowest average annual pay of any state in the country. At the same time, obesity is on the rise, bringing increases in diabetes, heart disease, disabilities and health care costs throughout the state.

Montana residents face serious public health challenges, including the need for protection from emerging public health concerns, such as West Nile virus and bioterrorism threats.

Dealing with current and newly emerging public health challenges requires a coordinated public health system that works with a variety of community partners and has sustained commitment, investment, and support.

### For more information

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## What is Montana Turning Point?

The national Turning Point Initiative aims to transform and strengthen the public health system in the United States by making it more community based and collaborative. Montana's Turning Point Initiative has defined the public health system to include traditional state and local public health agencies and a wide variety of community partners. These partners are currently engaged in implementing a strategic plan to improve our public health system and the health of our citizens.

## How is Montana's Turning Point Initiative improving public health?

- Implementing *A Strategic Plan for Public Health System Improvement in Montana* in collaboration with local public health agencies and other community partners to ensure that citizens across the state have access to a consistent set of public health services and expertise
- Promoting local partnerships with public health agencies working in coordination with hospitals, health care workers, nonprofit agencies, county governments, business, faith communities, and others to protect and promote the public's health
- Providing training and education for public health workers through the Montana Public Health Training Institute in order to supply local health settings with staff trained to respond to new and emerging public health issues and emergencies
- Facilitating communication among public health system partners, including building capacity in telecommunications and computer technology for increased efficiency and effectiveness throughout the public health system.
- Developing a performance management system for quality improvement and system accountability

## What can Montana Turning Point help you do?

- Work to ensure Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response efforts address all types of emergencies to better serve the public on a daily basis
- Assist in the evaluation and improvement of public health services to ensure funding is used appropriately
- Improve communication among local public health agencies to assure public health concerns are addressed with a coordinated statewide approach
- Serve as a reliable source of information on the status of the public's health in Montana

## Support

The Turning Point Initiative is funded by The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The National Program Office is located at the University of Washington School of Public Health and Community Medicine. Contact the National Program Office at 206-616-8410 or visit [www.turningpointprogram.org](http://www.turningpointprogram.org).