

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

### **Nebraska's Public Health**

In 2000, Nebraska's public health system was weak, fragmented, uncoordinated, and under-funded. It had 16 local health departments that covered 22 of the state's 93 counties.

With state funding from the Tobacco Settlement Fund, 16 new regional local public health departments were created and now cover all but one county.

Despite this expanded capacity, the public health system faces many challenges, such as major differences between the health of Nebraska's general population and its racial/ethnic minority populations, as well as obesity among all Nebraskans.

Nebraska high school students are twice as likely to drink and drive as their counterparts nationwide. Many Nebraskans are uninsured or under-insured, limiting their access to timely preventive and medical services.

Dealing with these complex challenges requires local public health departments that collaborate with diverse community partners to develop innovative solutions.

### **For more information**

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# Nebraska

# TurningPoint

**Collaborating for a New Century in Public Health**

### **What is Nebraska 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. Turning Point in Nebraska provided the stimulus for building and funding Nebraska's first comprehensive public health system at the community level.

### **How is Nebraska Turning Point improving public health?**

- Supporting the development of 16 new regional public health departments that have adopted a broad definition of health extending beyond medical care
- Encouraging collaborative partnerships at the local and state levels that include hospitals, physicians, nonprofit agencies, county governments, businesses, schools, faith communities, and environmental health organizations and are:
  - Developing strategic community plans that address local problems such as teenage smoking, obesity, diabetes, and injuries
  - Modifying outdated and fragmented laws that protect the public's health
  - Addressing the health disparities of racial/ethnic minorities
- Protecting the public from and planning for bioterrorism, infectious disease, contaminated food, and other emergency events
- Providing training opportunities to improve the skills and abilities of the public health work force

### **What can Nebraska Turning Point help you do?**

- Organize coalitions that identify priority health issues, recognize health threats, assess health service needs, and are accountable to local communities.
- Mobilize community partnerships to develop new policies and innovative strategies to address high priority health needs.
- Work with community coalitions to develop plans for bioterrorism events and other emergency conditions.
- Assist in the evaluation of programs and policies to determine the effectiveness and quality of health programs and services.

### **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).