

Polk County Health Department

Vision: Healthy People, Communities and Environment...Healthy Polk County

Mission: Promoting, Protecting and Preserving Health through Partnerships with People and Communities

Overview of the Department

The Polk County Health Department is a Level 3 nationally accredited Health Department under Chapter 140. It is governed by a Board of Health defined under Chapter 251. The Department carries out essential services which are those activities that lay the groundwork for healthy communities. These services protect us from diseases and injury we cannot prevent alone, and help to change behaviors which could cause us harm. These types of services do not happen in doctors' offices rather provide us with a healthy community to keep us out of doctors' offices. The public health essential services referenced above are:

Prevent Epidemics -The Health Department is active in disease surveillance, control and prevention. Much work has been done on preparedness and response to the recent H1N1 pandemic influenza outbreak as well as other infectious diseases. Immunizations against childhood and adult vaccine preventable disease are offered to the community. Our goal is PREVENTION of disease.

Protect the Environment, Workplaces, Housing, Food and Water- The Health Department is responsible for licensing and inspections of hotels, motels, swimming pools, campgrounds, body art establishments, tourist rooming houses as well as enforcing the county human health hazard ordinance, conducting annual beach water testing, managing a 4 county radon information center, and conducting a transient well water testing program in Polk and Burnett counties. The goal is for county citizens to have safe food to eat; safe water to drink and a healthy environment to live, play and work in.

Promote Healthy Behavior - All of the agency programs promote healthy behaviors. From nutrition education in WIC, motivational counseling in the substance use prevention programs, prenatal education in public health nursing, health teaching in Birth to 3, tobacco control strategies with youth, school based health screening & education programs, and preconception health services in Reproductive Health, the Department strives to educate and reinforce healthy behaviors. We know positive health behaviors have a great influence on overall health status.

Monitor the Health Condition of the Population - By keeping accurate health statistics, the department can identify major health disparities in our population. Regular community health needs assessments are conducted to assess the health of Polk county citizens and to plan for activities to target health improvement. County health data is examined regularly to assess trends in natality, morbidity, mortality, injury and health behaviors.

Mobilize Communities for Action -The Health Department has facilitated and participated in numerous countywide coalitions to address health priorities in Polk County. These coalitions have focused on alcohol and drug prevention, nutrition and physical activity, breastfeeding, emergency response planning, infection control, access to health care financing, long term care and youth enrichment. The Health Department is a fiscal agent for a 5 county multi jurisdiction coalition for tobacco control.

Respond to Disasters -The Health Department is the fiscal agent for a regional preparedness consortium of 9 counties and one tribe which focuses on planning and training for disaster response. Partnerships with law enforcement, emergency management, medical centers and others are strong.

Develop Policies to Promote Health -The Health Department in collaboration with the Board of Health is responsible for policy development around health issues. Many resolutions supporting policy at the state level have been initiated by the Board of Health and passed by the county board of supervisors.

Assure Access to Health Care - The Health Department has a family health benefits specialist that assists citizens in accessing health care financing. We participate in the county Healthwatch coalition to work with partners in our local medical clinics to assure access to Badger Care and Marketplace health care coverage.

Sources of Revenue: Tax Levy, Federal and State grants, private grants, Medicaid and other insurers, fees for services, donations, contracts for service. **Total 2015 budget: \$2.3 Million**