

KEY ISSUES

SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

- CDC: [Social Determinants of Health: Know What Affects Health](#)
- Health Affairs: [Meeting Individual Social Needs Falls Short of Addressing Social Determinants of Health](#)
- Health Affairs: [Coronavirus Responders Deserve Better](#)
- Kaiser Family Foundation: [Beyond Health Care: The Role of Social Determinants in Promoting Health and Health Equity](#) (pdf)

PUBLIC HEALTH FUNDING

- Of all U.S. health spending, only [3 percent is for public health](#). Since the 2008 recession, state and local health departments have lost 40,000 positions, or 15 percent of their workforce. See blog post [When We Need Them Most, the Number of Public Health Workers Continues to Decline](#) and infographic [Cuts to Public Health Hurts U.S. Preparedness](#) (pdf)
- Matter of Fact TV interview on public health and COVID-19: [Funding the First Line of Defense: Public Health](#)
- Trust for America's Health report: [Ready or Not: Protecting the Public's Health from Diseases, Disasters, and Bioterrorism 2020](#), with state-by-state assessment of preparedness (pdf)

HOMELESSNESS AND HEALTH

- [National Alliance to End Homelessness: Coronavirus and Homelessness](#)
- CDC: [COVID-19 and Homeless Populations](#)
- National Health Care for the Homeless Council: [Homelessness and Health: What's the Connection?](#) (pdf)

NURSING HOMES AND COVID

- Associated Press: [Nearly 26,000 COVID Deaths in Nursing Homes Spur Inspections](#)
- AARP: [How to Track COVID-19 Nursing Home Cases and Deaths in Your State](#)
- AARP: [When Can Visitors Return to Nursing Homes?](#)
- CDC: [COVID-19 and Nursing Homes & Long-Term Care Facilities](#)

WHAT IS PUBLIC HEALTH?

When Americans say “health,” they often mean healthcare or health insurance — not public health or community health. Our nation spends more on healthcare than any other developed country, but we rank below comparable countries in nearly every indicator, including life expectancy, heart disease, obesity, and diabetes. Healthcare often (but not always) occurs after someone has become sick and doesn't keep people healthy in the first place—public health does.

Eighty percent of a person's health is shaped by his or her access to items like stable housing, quality and healthy food, parks and public transportation, and more. Public health workers touch all of these through their work with government agencies, nonprofits, and other local organizations to make sure people have safe, stable affordable housing, food on the table, clean water, and access to parks and public transportation – in addition to responding to disease outbreaks, natural disasters, and environmental threats. In a nutshell, they are focused on prevention – keeping people healthy in the first place.