Governmental public health in Kansas: the case for change

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The Health of Kansans

• America’s Health Rankings analyses behaviors, conditions, policies, and clinical care to analyze the health of the nation.
• Kansas was ranked 10th in 1992.
• Kansas was ranked 26th in 2015.

Source: http://www.americashealthrankings.org/states
The Health of Kansans

Percent of Adults Who are Overweight or Obese

- 65% of all Kansans
- 55% in Douglas County
- Over 75% in Cherokee County

Source: http://www.kdheks.gov/brfss/BRFSS2013/

The Health of Kansans

Percent of Adults Who Currently Smoke Cigarettes

- 20% of all Kansans
- 12.6% in Johnson County
- 45% in Geary County

Source: http://www.kdheks.gov/brfss/BRFSS2013/
The Health of Kansans

Percent of Adults With Diagnosed Diabetes

• 10% of all Kansans
• 4.5% in Riley County
• 17% in Wilson County

Source: http://www.kdheks.gov/brfs/BRFSS2013/

The Health of Kansans

Infant Mortality

• A 2014 KDHE report on infant mortality showed a decline in infant mortality between 1995 and 2014.
• The 2014 rate of 6.3 deaths per 1,000 live births is still higher than the national target.

The Health of Kansans

- Adults living below poverty line are twice as likely to use tobacco
- African American and Latina women are at 20% greater risk for heart disease than White women
- Risk of cancer death is 48% higher for those w/out at least a HS diploma
- For most of past 20 years, infant mortality is twice as high for African American compared to White

Source: Steve Coen, Kansas Health Foundation Symposium, June 2016

Clarity About the Role of Public Health

Source: KHI.org
FY ‘15 Public Health Funding Levels

- Kansas spent $12.40 per capita
- Ranked 47th out of 50 states (plus D.C.)
- Kansas ranked #39 in CDC funding per capita
- Kansas ranked #35 in HRSA grants dollars to states.

Source: Investing in America's Health: A State-by-State Look at Public Health Funding and Key Health Facts

Kansas Public Health Laws

- Limited in scope and insufficient
- Current laws don’t address topics related to chronic disease and the emerging role of public health agencies
- Other states have adopted more robust statutes
Are Communities Prepared to Address the Drivers of Health?

Many health disparities that exist in our state are rooted in issues related to health drivers of:

- Education
- Income
- Housing

2015 Statewide Public Health Vision Summit

- All Kansans should live in safe and healthy communities.
- Funding, politics and leadership are a vicious cycle for governmental public health
- “Public” is under siege in Kansas
- Political will has the power to impede progress on public health issues
The Future of Public Health In Kansas

• The gap is widening between the current reality & our aspirations for a strong public health system.
• We hope to build a pathway by which we can assure a core set of public health services for all Kansans.