

# LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS IN NEW YORK STATE WHAT WE ARE—WHAT WE DO



**County  
Health Officials  
of New York**  
Leading the way to healthier communities

**Strong, vibrant local health departments (LHDs) creating healthy, safe communities in New York State — this is NYSACHO’s vision. To attain this vision, LHDs work within the operating standards developed by the National Association of City and County Health Officials. Below are the 10 standards with explanations of how New York State’s LHDs meet them, including specific local examples.**

## YOUR LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS (LHDs) AT WORK:

- **Monitor health status and understand health issues facing the community:** LHDs conduct community health assessments by analyzing community health quality data and convening community stakeholders, such as hospitals, other health care providers, schools, businesses and non-profit organizations to identify and design strategies to address the health and prevention priorities in their communities. *Steuben County LHD and their Steuben Prevention Coalition identified underage drinking as a health concern in their county. The coalition created a Task Force on Underage Drinking to develop strategies to reduce the number of underage drinkers. The task force works to educate youth, their families, and the community on the risks and consequences of underage drinking. Initiatives include the Annual Alcohol Poster Contest, the Sticker Shock program, media campaigns and an annual Adult Perception Survey.*
- **Protect people from health problems and hazards:** LHDs investigate communicable disease reports and outbreaks; provide childhood and adult immunizations directly or connect families to providers who offer immunizations; and implement evidence-based programs to address other emerging health hazards. *The Putnam County LHD’s “Opioid Overdose Prevention Program” joins dozens of other counties in adopting this public health intervention to battle the state’s current heroin epidemic. The program utilizes Naloxone, an antidote drug which reverses the heroin overdose.*
- **Give people information they need to make healthy choices:** LHDs work with schools and other community stakeholders to encourage good nutrition and physical activity; reach out to pregnant women and new moms to encourage breastfeeding; and develop tobacco-free coalitions to connect people with smoking cessation programs. *Broome County LHD’s “Creating a Healthier Broome” initiative has been recognized by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation for its “Focus on What Works” program. This program focuses on key initiatives such as complete streets projects, sodium reduction programs in school districts, breakfast at school to encourage participation in the free or reduced-price lunch program, and smoke-free housing.*
- **Engage the community to identify and solve health problems:** LHDs engage their communities through local events, municipal meetings, surveys and focus groups. *Westchester County’s LHD uses an innovative Telehealth Intervention Programs for Seniors (TIPS) to improve access to health care and drive down medical costs through distance monitoring of vital signs, social check-ups and other services.*

**THE COUNTY  
HEALTH  
OFFICIALS OF NEW  
YORK (NYSACHO)  
REPRESENTS ALL 58  
LOCAL HEALTH  
DEPARTMENTS  
IN NEW YORK STATE.**

**OUR MISSION:  
TO SUPPORT  
LOCAL HEALTH  
DEPARTMENTS IN  
THEIR WORK TO  
PREVENT DISEASE,  
DISABILITY AND  
INJURY AND  
PROMOTE HEALTH  
AND WELLNESS  
THROUGHOUT  
NEW YORK STATE**

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- ⇒ **Develop public health policies and plans:** LHDs in NYS have been national leaders in creating policies and plans that reduce the burden of chronic diseases. *On January 2015, Suffolk County joined New York City as one of the first counties in the nation to ban the sale of tobacco products to persons under the age of 21, including products such as e-cigarettes and liquid nicotine.*
- ⇒ **Enforce public health laws and regulations:** LHDs inspect restaurants, pools, beaches, hotels and children's camps to ensure they comply with public health laws and regulations. They also monitor public and individual water supply systems and offer rabies clinics to assist pet owners in complying with New York State vaccination laws. *Nassau County's LHD works collaboratively with public water services to maintain compliance with the New York State Sanitary Code, Part 5 drinking water standards or maximum contaminant levels (MCL). Testing is performed at operating wells and at locations throughout the distribution system to ensure safe drinking water for all Nassau County residents.*
- ⇒ **Help people receive health services:** Where access to medical care is lacking, whether due to inadequate provider capacity, lack of insurance or underinsurance, LHDs provide immunizations, sexually-transmitted disease (STD) treatment, dental care and home health services. LHDs strive to connect individuals with medical homes for routine care and they may coordinate care during public health emergencies. *The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's "Family Planning Benefit Program" (FPBP) is a public health insurance program providing access to comprehensive and confidential family planning services to men and women of childbearing age who may not be able to afford such services through conventional insurance.*
- ⇒ **Maintain a competent public health workforce:** LHDs work with a variety of academic institutions and other organizations to receive low and no-cost opportunities for both in-person and distance learning opportunities for LHD staff. Recruitment, training and staff development are critical to maintaining the public health infrastructure of New York State. *Livingston County LHD is the first county in New York State to achieve national accreditation through the Public Health Accreditation Board. Several other LHDs in New York State are in the process of becoming accredited.*
- ⇒ **Evaluate and improve programs and interventions:** New York State and New York City measure the effectiveness of public health interventions in improving health outcomes, performance and quality of public health programs. *Erie County's LHD uses HealthLink, a community-based virtual medical records system that enables physicians, hospitals and insurance organizations to share clinical information in efficient and meaningful ways in order to improve the delivery of care. HealthLink has helped the LHD improve and expedite its rabies investigations, tracking and monitoring of STDs, and reporting of other high priority health indicators.*
- ⇒ **Contribute to and apply the evidence base of public health:** New York State utilizes and contributes to evidence-based and practice-based research. LHDs use research tools such as The Guide to Community Preventive Services to inform their practice. *Schenectady County's Healthy Family New York (HFNY) home visiting program promotes the positive parenting skills that support and encourage children's growth across developmental stages. A controlled trial demonstrated that mothers in the HFNY program were more likely to use positive parenting strategies compared to mothers in the control group. These results indicate parenting competencies may contribute to the early school successes by children who participated in HFNY.*