

The Essential Public Health Services¹

1. Monitor health status to identify community health problems
2. Diagnose and investigate health problems and health hazards in the community
3. Inform, educate, and empower people about health issues
4. Mobilize community partnerships to identify and solve health problems
5. Develop policies and plans that support individual and community health efforts
6. Enforce laws and regulations that protect health and ensure safety
7. Link people to needed personal health services and assure the provision of health care when otherwise unavailable
8. Assure a competent public health and personal health care workforce
9. Evaluate effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of personal and population-based health services
10. Research for new insights and innovative solutions to health problems

The Eleven Core Functions and Capabilities of State Public Health Laboratories

A task force assembled by APHL, with support from and in collaboration with the CDC, developed a set of core functions of state public health laboratories. The term *core function* is defined as “a role assumed by the laboratory that underlies the laboratory’s ability to support public health.” They describe the broader functions and elements that are necessary to ensure the laboratory capability to execute the core functions. APHL adopted the core functions and capabilities at its 2000 Annual Meeting as the consensus position of the association.

According to the position, all State Public Health Laboratories should be capable of performing:²

1. Disease prevention, control, and surveillance
2. Integrated data management
3. Reference and specialized testing
4. Environmental health and protection
5. Food safety
6. Laboratory improvement and regulation
7. Policy development
8. Emergency response
9. Public health-related research
10. Training and education
11. Partnerships and communication

¹ Public Health Functions Steering Committee: Public Health in America. July 1994.

² Core Functions and Capabilities of State Public Health Laboratories: A Report of the Association of Public Health Laboratories (CDC 20sep02)