CSTE 2024 Epidemiology Capacity Assessment

The ability of the U.S. public health system to protect us from current and emerging health threats is at stake.

Applied epidemiology workforce and capacity needs remain unmet.

The capacity to deliver essential epidemiology public health services for the U.S. has declined — and is in danger of declining further due to lack of sustained federal funding, especially with the end of COVID-19 funding.

State of the applied epidemiology workforce:

5,706 Current number of epidemiologists in state health departments

2,537 Additional epidemiologists needed in state health departments to meet basic public health needs

242% Increase needed over current staffing levels for tribal epidemiologists in state health departments

COVID-19 FUNDING IMPACT

1,000+ Staff at Risk

States anticipate losing nearly one-fifth of existing staff with the end of COVID-19 pandemic funding.

Most states still **lack a lead** in oral health, genomics/advanced molecular detection, reproductive health, generalist, tribal and mental health.

Genomics/advanced molecular detection had the **greatest increase in epidemiology capacity** since 2021.

The greatest number of **positions needed** are in infectious disease areas, informatics, chronic disease, maternal and child health, and environmental health.

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Select Recommendations

Data Modernization and Informatics

Provide on-the-job training for current health department staff to learn about data modernization and informatics topics.

Funding

Provide long-term flexible, disease-agnostic funding streams that allow jurisdictions to prioritize the needs of their communities.

Collaboration and Engagement

Build relationships with community partners to enhance implementation of health measures, particularly in preparation for future emergencies.

Workforce Pipeline

Facilitate relationships with academic institutions such as high schools, colleges, and universities to promote awareness of governmental epidemiology as a career path.

Training

Facilitate protected, dedicated time and leadership support for professional development of personnel.

Hiring, Recruitment, and Retention

Prioritize hiring for program areas with the greatest need, including infectious disease and informatics.

CSTE resources and training to support ECA 2024 recommendations

CSTE Learn
Free epidemiology courses and resource library.

CSTE fellowship program
To grow epidemiology capacity and develop leaders.

Applied Epidemiology Competences (AECs) toolkit
Professional development resources for use in health departments.

About the 2024 CSTE Epidemiology Capacity Assesment (ECA)

The CSTE Epidemiology Capacity Assessment (ECA) report is the most complete and comprehensive national data on the U.S. applied epidemiology workforce. For over 20 years CSTE has reported on staffing, vacancies, funding, training needs, and other domains to be the voice for applied epidemiologists, the key sector of the U.S. public health workforce.

Learn more about the report here: www.cste.org.

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