



## Introduction to Public Health

Presented by:

The California-Nevada  
Public Health Training Center

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## Learning Objectives

**After this tutorial you will be able to...**

1. List two defining characteristics of public health.
2. Identify 10 essential public health services.
3. Briefly describe the history of public health in the United States, including listing 10 great public health achievements.

## I. WHAT IS PUBLIC HEALTH?

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### Defining Public Health

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- **American Public Health Association**
  - “The practice of preventing disease and promoting good health with groups of people, from small communities to entire countries.”
- **Institute of Medicine**
  - “The science and art of preventing disease, prolonging life, and promoting health and efficiency through organized community effort.”
- **World Health Organization**
  - “All organized measures (whether public or private) to prevent disease, promote health, and prolong life among the population as a whole.”

# Defining Public Health

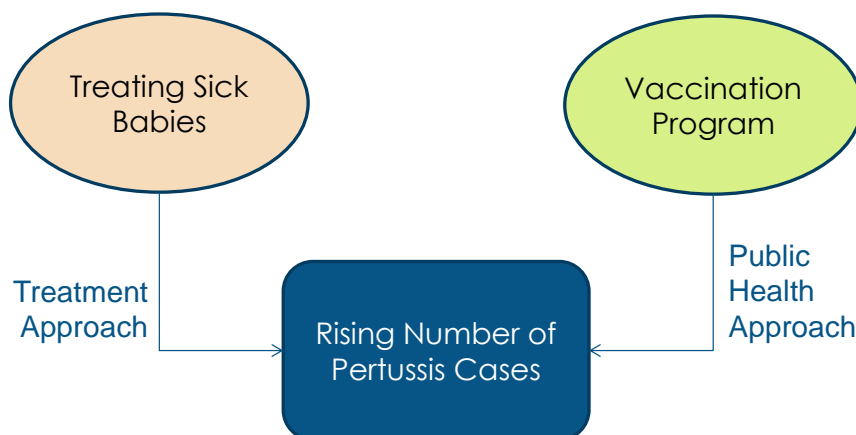
- **Common key characteristics:**

- Focus on

- prevention
    - communities and populations



## Defining Public Health: Example of Childhood Vaccinations



## Essential Public Health Services

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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.

Public Health Functions Steering Committee (1994)

## Essential Public Health Services

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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.

Public Health Functions Steering Committee (1994)

## II. HISTORY OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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### “A Court For King Cholera”

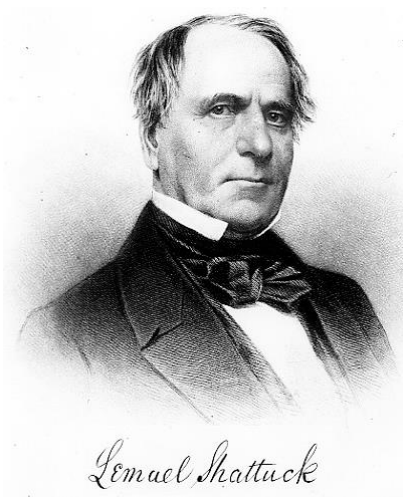
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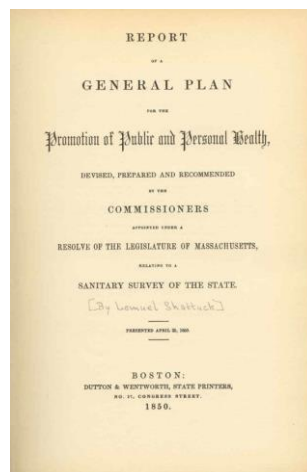
A COURT FOR KING CHOLERA.

<http://webs.bcp.org/sites/vcleary/ModernWorldHistoryTextbook/IndustrialRevolution/IREffects.html>

# Early U.S. Public Health System



[http://www.concordlibrary.org/collect/fin\\_aids/shattuck.html](http://www.concordlibrary.org/collect/fin_aids/shattuck.html)



[http://sphweb.bumc.bu.edu/otl/mph-modules/ep/ep713\\_surveillance/EP713\\_Surveillance2.html](http://sphweb.bumc.bu.edu/otl/mph-modules/ep/ep713_surveillance/EP713_Surveillance2.html)

## Major Eras in Public Health History

**Prior to 1850:** Battling epidemics

**1850-1949:** Building state and local infrastructure

**1950-1999:** Filling gaps in medical care delivery

**After 1999:** Preparing for and responding to community health threats

(Turnock, 2007)

## 10 Great Public Health Achievements, 1900-1999

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|--|---|
| 1. Vaccination of newborns and children                    | 6. Safer and healthier foods                  |
| 2. Improved motor vehicle safety                           | 7. Healthier mothers and babies               |
| 3. Safer workplaces  | 8. Improved Family planning                   |
| 4. Control of infectious diseases                          | 9. Fluoridation of drinking water             |
| 5. Decline in death from stroke and coronary heart disease | 10. Recognition of tobacco as a health hazard |

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1999

## III. WHY DOES PUBLIC HEALTH MATTER?

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## The Importance of Public Health

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- **Public health...**
  - reduces deaths
  - reduces suffering
  - enhances quality of life
  - promotes cost-effective policies and programs
  - strives to protect the health of all populations

## Multi-Sectoral Collaboration

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- We live in an increasingly complex and interconnected society.
- Public health problems cannot be solved by the health sector alone.
- Health professionals will need to work with individuals from other sectors to maximize the impact of public health practice.