UNDERSTANDING BASIC PUBLIC HEALTH PRINCIPLES
What Is Health?

The most frequently used definition of Health is the one created in 1948 by the World Health Organization (WHO)
Health is... a dynamic state of complete physical, mental, spiritual, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.*

and...

Public health is “What we as a society do collectively to assure the conditions in which people can be healthy.”**
Public Health

- prevents disease, prolongs life, and promotes health

- organized community effort for sanitation of the environment, control of communicable infections, education in personal hygiene, organization of medical and nursing services, development of the social machinery

- ensures everyone a standard of living, adequate for the maintenance of health.
What does medicine do?
Saves lives one at a time

What does public health do?
Saves communities at a time
Institute of Medicine

- Provided recommendations which continue to impact today’s Public Health System
- Defined the **Public Health Mission**
- Identified the **3 Core Functions of Public Health**
Public Health Mission

• Fulfilling society’s interest in assuring conditions in which people can be healthy.
Public Health Functions

- Core functions of all levels of Public Health agencies are:
  - Assessment
  - Policy Development
  - Assurance
ASSESSMENT

Every PH agency regularly and systematically should collect, assemble, analyze, and make available information on the health of the community, including statistics on health status, community health needs, and epidemiologic and other studies of health problems.

*The Future of Public Health*, Institute of Medicine 1988
POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Every PH agency should exercise its responsibility to serve the public interest in the development of comprehensive public policies by promoting the use of the scientific knowledge base in decision-making about PH and by leading in developing PH policy. Agencies must take a strategic approach, developed on the basis of positive appreciation for the democratic political process.

The Future of Public Health, Institute of Medicine 1988
ASSURANCE

PH agencies must assure their constituents that services necessary to achieve agreed upon goals are provided, either by encouraging other entities (private or public sector) by requiring such action through regulation, or by providing services directly.

*The Future of Public Health, Institute of Medicine 1988*
The Essential Public Health Services

- Evaluation and continuous quality improvement
- Community health assessment; registries
- Investigate infectious water-, food-, and vector-borne disease outbreaks
- Health education and health promotion
- Partnerships with private sector, civic groups, NGOs, faith community, etc.
- Strategic planning; community health improvement planning
- Identifying and sharing best practices; participation in research
- Public health workforce and leadership
- Access to care, link with primary care
- Enforcement, review of laws
Public Health serves communities and the individuals within them by providing an array of essential services.

Local Health Departments and agencies work with communities to achieve the essential services.