

State public health workforce grew from 2013 to 2017

August 29 2018



(HealthDay)—The state health department epidemiology workforce

increased 22 percent from 2013 to 2017, according to research published in the Aug. 24 issue of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*.

Jessica Arrazola, Dr.P.H., from the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists in Atlanta, and colleagues conducted the sixth periodic Epidemiology Capacity Assessment, a national survey that evaluates trends in workforce size, funding, and epidemiology capacity among state [health](#) departments. A standardized web-based questionnaire was sent to the state [epidemiologist](#) in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, the U.S. territories, and the Federated States of Micronesia.

The researchers found that from 2013 to 2017, the number of state health department epidemiologists increased 22 percent, from 2,752 to 3,369. This is the highest number of workers since the first survey in 2004. Funding for epidemiologic activities and personnel is primarily provided by the federal government (77 percent). Substantial to full capacity (50 to 100 percent) was the highest for investigating health problems (92 percent of health departments) and monitoring health status (84 percent), while capacity was much lower for evaluating effectiveness (39 percent) and applied research (29 percent). To reach full capacity to conduct the four Essential Public Health Services, an estimated additional 1,200 epidemiologists are needed.

"More epidemiologists and greater expertise in evaluation and applied research are needed to achieve comprehensive health department [capacity](#)," the authors write.

More information: [Abstract/Full Text](#)

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Citation: State public health workforce grew from 2013 to 2017 (2018, August 29) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2018-08-state-health-workforce-grew.html>

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