

# RIVERSIDE COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

## FUTURE OF PUBLIC HEALTH OVERVIEW

Through the 2022 Budget Act, California took a transformational step toward rebuilding our state and local public health workforce and infrastructure that was devastated by the COVID-19 pandemic and decades of disinvestment. The \$276 million ongoing General Fund investment (roughly \$188 million for local health departments, \$98 million for CDPH), referred to as the Future of Public Health, is a critical investment in our state's public health readiness and response to protect local communities from existing and emerging public health threats.

## FUTURE OF PUBLIC HEALTH INVESTMENTS REBUILD OUR LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH WORKFORCE AND INFRASTRUCTURE

- **Workforce** – Hired 105 full-time staff, including nurses, microbiologists, epidemiologists, disease specialists, health workers, educators, accountants, an economist, and program and administrative personnel.
- **Mobile Teams** – FoPH funds supported immunization mobile team staffing, expanding access to vaccines, health screenings, and education for underserved communities. Serving as the front line for VFC, VFA, and state-funded influenza programs, the teams provided vaccines to uninsured adults and uninsured or Medi-Cal-eligible children. From July 2024 to June 2025, they administered 6,382 doses to over 4,000 patients, held 68 school-based clinics, and delivered 25 in-home clinics for homebound residents.
- **Community Outreach** – FoPH supported health equity outreach teams that have participated in 991 communities. Across these events, the teams engaged with nearly 50,400 community members, providing health education and preventive health resources. Outreach teams distributed more than 6,710 COVID-19 test kits, approximately 2,800 fentanyl test strips, nearly 6,300 doses of naloxone, and nearly 900 xylazine test strips, helping reduce health disparities and increase access to life-saving tools throughout Riverside County.
- **Epidemiology and Data** – The addition of ten epidemiologists and research specialists has enhanced the department's data analysis and reporting capabilities, increasing transparency and accessibility for the community. The team has developed multiple public dashboards, including on heat- and respiratory-related illnesses, recognized as best practices by CDPH. They have tripled the number of data briefs and reports published annually, covering topics such as maternal health, suicide, life expectancy, and dementia, and introduced monthly "Data Digests" to highlight key insights from multiple sources.

- **Public Health Laboratory** – FoPH funding supported nine key laboratory positions that are essential to statewide initiatives, including antimicrobial resistance (AMR) surveillance, PulseNet foodborne disease monitoring, and wastewater surveillance. These programs identify emerging resistant organisms, rapidly investigate outbreaks through molecular subtyping, and provide population-level early warning of pathogens circulating in the community. The dedicated workforce has expanded in-house testing capacity, improving turnaround times, strengthening stakeholder engagement, and enabling locally tailored reporting to better meet community needs.
- **HIV/STD** – FoPH funding supported one full-time Communicable Disease Specialist, increasing the county's capacity for timely HIV and STI case investigations, partner services, and linkage-to-care. This added staffing has shortened the time from case notification to initial client contact and improved coordination across surveillance and clinical teams. FoPH enhanced diagnostic and clinical infrastructure by funding medical equipment for the Early Intervention Program (EIP), including medical-grade refrigerators, a Clinitek Status+ Analyzer, and MPOX test kits.
- **Tuberculosis** – In 2024, an active TB case at a local high school potentially exposed more than 170 students and staff. A screening clinic was rapidly established, and all exposed individuals were tested within three days, preventing further spread in the school and community.
- **Norovirus** – Disease control responded to six norovirus outbreaks in congregate living settings, affecting over 150 residents and staff. FoPH-funded personnel conducted interviews, identified exposed individuals, and provided guidance to limit transmission. Additional staffing reduced response time from five to two days per outbreak and enabled detection of a community-wide norovirus increase two weeks before CDC reported similar trends.
- **Climate Justice** – FoPH funding has strengthened its capacity to address climate-related health risks in Riverside County. This year, the team developed a climate justice training module for staff and assessed hazards in unincorporated communities, identifying areas vulnerable to heat, poor air quality, flooding, and wildfires. The program participates in CDPH's Climate and Health Equity Advisory Group, produces bilingual materials for underserved populations, and is revitalizing the Healthy Cities Network to integrate equity, sustainability, and climate resilience into local planning.
- **LEAN Management System** – FoPH funding supported staff training on LEAN management to streamline processes, reduce waste, and improve quality. Over 400 employees—nearly 50% of the department—are now engaged in a tiered huddle system to rapidly share information and escalate issues, with full implementation planned by the end of 2025. Disease control staff conducted a rapid improvement event (RIE) to shorten initial response times for select infectious diseases, resulting in faster responses to cases such as E. coli, Salmonella, and Hepatitis A.