

SANTA CLARA 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

- Hired 31 FTEs across a broad range of public health positions.
- Used funds to support their Wastewater-Based Epidemiology Program to make online dashboards about COVID-19, influenza, mpox, and other infectious diseases publicly available to give the community visibility into the spread of disease locally and take protective action.
- Created a new Science, Epidemiology, Informatics, and Improvement Branch with our inaugural Chief Science Officer (paid for by FoPH) to lead all elements of their data and science work, including completion of an Overdose Data to Action Needs Assessment.
- FoPH funding has been critical for Santa Clara County's H5N1 avian influenza response. Funds have allowed for upgrading our public health laboratory facilities and supporting critical positions including a microbiologist, disease investigators, and program coordinators, which afforded us the lab capacity to detect the first presence of H5 in samples of raw milk in November 2024.

- Created a dedicated Racial Health Equity team with two FTE. This team supports all branches of the Department to facilitate an equity-focused approach to the work of each branch. The Department's enhanced data and technology infrastructure will provide the much-needed information and knowledge to assess gaps and community needs, identify areas of focus, and evaluate the impact of the Department's work.
- FoPH funding supported key staff positions – a communicable disease investigator and public health nurse – who played key roles in response to a measles case and multi-jurisdiction exposure in Santa Clara County. The county worked closely with neighboring Santa Cruz County on potential further exposures and used CalCONNECT to reach close contacts and issue information to potentially exposed individuals.
- FoPH funded a Climate and Health Manager position to support projects to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change, including enhancing tree canopies, preparing vehicularly housed residents for heat and air quality events, and establishing a resident advisory board.
- FoPH supported the development of a County Latino Health Assessment through funding of key staff positions and by funding an oversampling of a health survey to collect more precise health status information for Latino/x/e populations in the county.