

TULARE COUNTY HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY

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

- Supported recruitment and hiring of epidemiologist, deputy health officer, communicable disease investigators, laboratory staff, emergency services specialist, and other personnel to respond to communicable disease cases and outbreaks.
- Leveraging funds allocated through the Future of Public Health, Tulare instituted a comprehensive response to rises in communicable diseases such as Valley Fever, Tuberculosis, MPOX, and H5N1. This includes deploying a team of communicable disease investigators, laboratory personnel for testing, an epidemiologist for data analysis, and oversight from our Deputy Health Officer. Furthermore, our staff has actively collaborated with local hospitals and health clinics to ensure effective case management and utilized health education specialists to create messaging and social media to inform the public on how to protect themselves and/or seek medical care.
- Hired a dedicated full-time PH Lab Director. The Tulare County Public Health Lab has grown to be a robust and highly dependable lab within our region. The lab was relied upon as a strong resource during the pandemic and H5N1, and continues to support the State and nearby counties. Prior to FoPH funding, the department had to contract with public health lab directors to cover the minimal requirements in regulations.

- ▶▶▶ Supported an Equity Coordinator and support staff to lead countywide outreach and engagement efforts to disadvantaged communities with limited access to resources and information. These efforts directly contribute to the Community Health Assessment and Community Health Improvement Plan.
- ▶▶▶ Supported a Quality Assurance Nurse to lead teams that have established strong links and relationships with congregate settings to work alongside them and strengthen infection prevention initiatives.
- ▶▶▶ FoPH funding played a critical role in supporting essential staff positions during the response to California's first human and animal H5N1 avian influenza cases. These personnel worked closely with local, state, and federal partners to assess and mitigate community risks associated with H5N1. Through FoPH support, Tulare County has built the staffing and capacity needed to effectively respond to large-scale public health emergencies that impact the community.