

## Summary - Revitalize and Reorganize Our Public Health Infrastructure

Public health was the fourth of four priority areas in our April 2021 [\*Emerging From COVID-19: An Action Plan for a Healthier State\*](#), a set of 24 consensus-driven recommendations designed to strengthen our health care system.

Little public information exists about the organization of our public health infrastructure and the flow of resources from the federal government to local public health departments. Public health funding needs to become a priority, especially in non-emergent periods. In New Jersey, we fare worse than most of the country in terms of public health investment.

A clear area for improvement now is enhancing the relationship between local public health departments and the various agencies and organizations that also play a role in emergency management, delivering health care services, and working in the community.

One of the core functions of a public health system is to prevent the spread of infectious diseases. And one of the best strategies in the fight against that spread is vaccination. The New Jersey Immunization Information System (NJIIIS) should include immunization records for all New Jerseyans, including adults, to build more robust public health data sets.

### RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

22. Assess public health infrastructure and evaluate resources.
23. Align public health infrastructures with relevant organizations.
24. Establish a universal immunization registry.





## RECENT ACTIONS TAKEN

- The release of the Action Plan led to additional conversations with public health experts in New Jersey who recommended the following corrections and clarifications:
  - LINCS agencies are local health departments and are included in the count of more than 90 local health departments.
  - More than 90% of municipalities in New Jersey participate in some form of shared services agreement for local public health services.
  - By statute, the Public Health Council should have nine members; it currently has only three due to unfilled vacancies.
  - All 21 counties in New Jersey, and the City of Trenton, have [Governmental Public Health Partnerships](#), regional forums that bring together local health officials to identify, plan, and organize regional local health resources.
- Recommendation # 22 – With support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy of Rutgers University, examined public health in New Jersey and issued “[Enhancing Local Public Health Capacity in New Jersey](#).”
- Recommendation # 23 – The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation released a call for proposals for “[Incubating a Public Health Institute in New Jersey](#).” Public health institutes advance population health and well-being.
- Recommendation # 24 – [Legislation](#) introduced by Assemblyman Herb Conaway would require automatic registration with New Jersey Immunization Information System.

*Support for this work was provided by the [Robert Wood Johnson Foundation](#). The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect the views of the Foundation.*



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