

Weathering the COVID Storm: Impact on National, State and Local Public Health Efforts Now and in the Future

Dialogue for Action
May 5, 2021

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Chief Medical Officer

Association of State and Territorial Health
Officials

State Health Agency Leadership

Leadership

State health agencies (SHAs) are led by a **state health official (SHO)**, also known as a secretary or commissioner.

SHOs bring a variety of experiences to the job.



64% hold a medical degree.



Of those, **52%** also have an **MPH**.

SHO
Appointed by

Governor **66%**

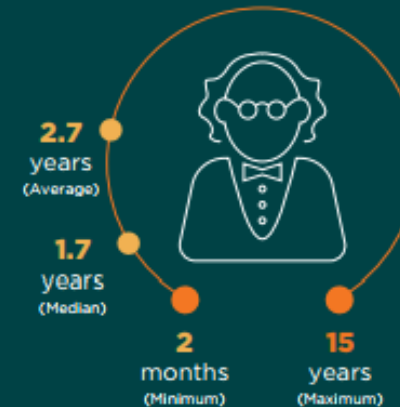
State's secretary of health and human services **14%**

Board or commission **10%**

Other **10%**

Tenure

SHO tenure is highly variable.



48% of SHOs report directly to the governor.





The New York Times

**“All Hands on Deck’: Health Workers Race to Track
Thousands of Americans Amid Coronavirus”**

- Feb. 22, 2020

Health Departments Feel Strain During COVID-19 Pandemic

POLITICO

“States brace for disasters as pandemic collides with hurricane season”

- June 1, 2020

“Getting it right: States struggle with contact tracing push”

- May 18, 2020

STAT

“We need one response — not 50 — to fight Covid-19”

- May 22, 2020

CNN

“The opioid epidemic was already a national crisis. Covid-19 could be making things worse”

- May 7, 2020

The New York Times

“Coronavirus Makes Cooling Centers Risky, Just as Scorching Weather Hits”

- May 6, 2020

FSN | **Food Safety News**

“Local health departments feeling the strain of coronavirus pandemic”

- April 9, 2020

Washington Examiner

“States face having to cut public health programs during pandemic”

- June 2, 2020

ROUTE FIFTY

“In Hard-Hit New Jersey, COVID-19 Saddles Some Small Health Departments With Crushing Workload”

- May 23, 2020

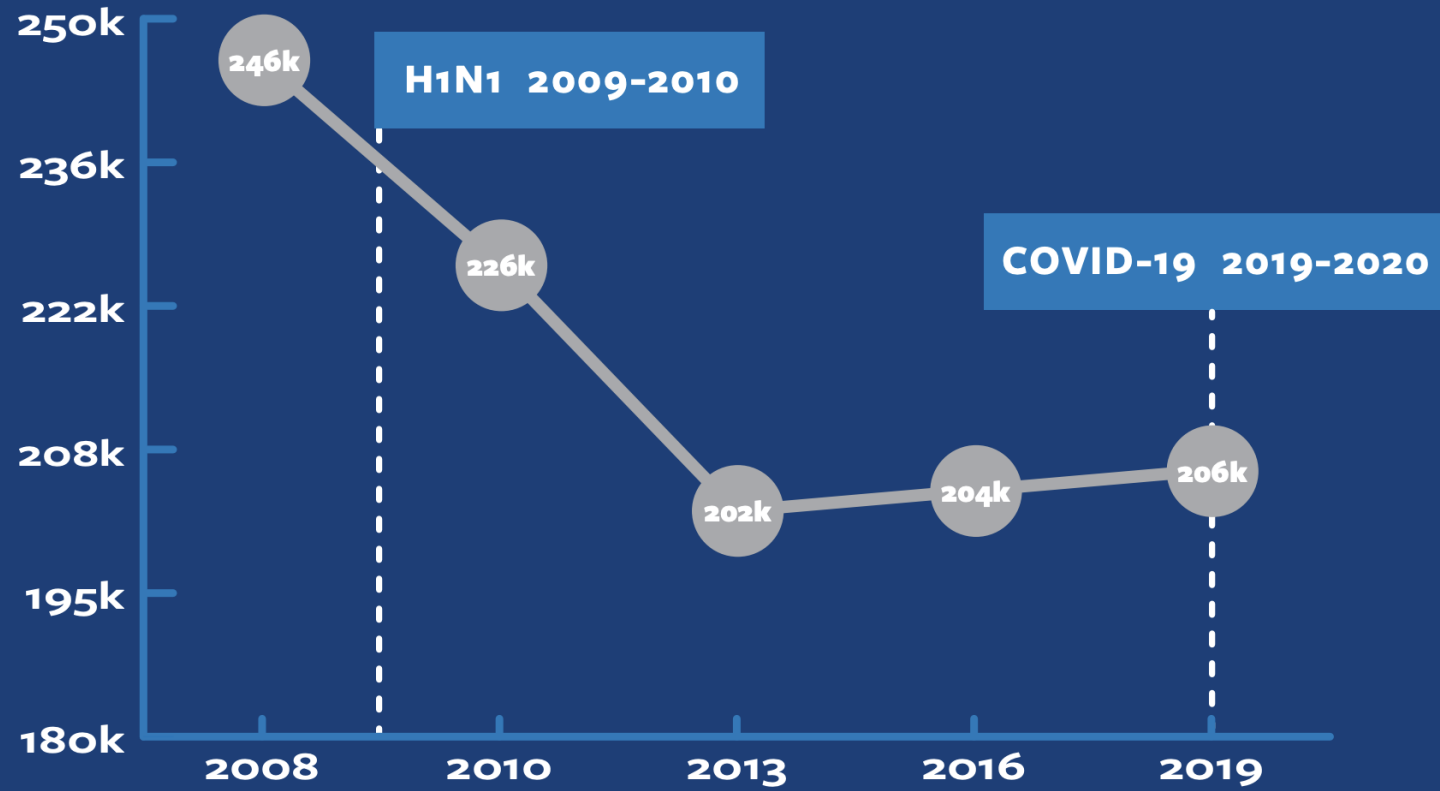
FUNDING FOR PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCIES DECLINED
10.3% FROM 2010-2018



THE SIZE OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH WORKFORCE DECREASED
10% SINCE 2012



But the number of public health workers has declined...
at a time we need them most.



Source: Analysis by JP Leider and the de Beaumont Foundation using data from ASTHO and NACCHO Profile Surveys 2008, 2010, 2013, 2016, and 2019.

The Challenging Course of the Pandemic?

The Washington Post

“Trump administration’s new rapid coronavirus tests plagued by confusion and a lack of planning”

- Sept. 29, 2020



“CDC tells Congress it urgently needs \$6 billion for vaccine distribution”

- Sept. 18, 2020

“FDA moves on vaccines spark political worries”

-Sept. 7, 2020



“States Report Coronavirus Cases Linked To Sturgis, S.D., Motorcycle Rally”

-Sept. 2, 2020

WELL + GOOD

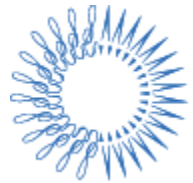
“Scientists Believe COVID-19 Is Airborne—Here’s What That Means”

-Sept. 23, 2020

Bloomberg

“Trump’s Pre-Election Goal for a Vaccine Has States on Edge”

-Sept. 4, 2020



PEW

“Preparing for the Worst, Health Agencies Mount Unprecedented Flu Shot Drives”

-Sept. 10, 2020



“Here's why a vaccine will not stop the Covid-19 pandemic right away”

-Sept. 15, 2020

The New York Times

“C.D.C. Tells States How to Prepare for Covid-19 Vaccine by Early November”

-Sept. 2, 2020

State/Territorial Health Officials in Spotlight Face Unique Challenges and Critique

The Washington Post

“Local Public Health Workers Report Hostile Threats And Fears About Contact Tracing”

- June 3, 2020

“Ohio’s Amy Acton inspires admiration, and a backlash, with tough coronavirus response”

- May 18, 2020



“Please don’t misgender me’: Reporter calls Pa. health secretary ‘sir’ multiple times during interview”

- June 13, 2020



“Political Fight Over Church Gatherings Risks Further Coronavirus Spread”

- April 9, 2020



"Some of these decisions are not popular, but public health officials are just trying to keep people safe."

-June 3, 2020

We Stand With Public Health: A Call to Action



The Washington Post

[“Biden sets nation on seven-week sprint to near-universal vaccine access”](#)

– Mar. 12, 2021

The New York Times

[“In Quest for Herd Immunity, Giant Vaccination Sites Proliferate”](#)

– Feb. 28, 2021



[“More schools are preparing to open as coronavirus cases drop and vaccinations rise”](#)

– Mar. 11, 2021

POLITICO

[“Urgency to ramp up vaccination clashes with Biden’s equity focus”](#)

– Feb. 1, 2021

A New Normal for Public Health Agencies

May 19, 2020 | 10:55 a.m. | Marcus Plescia MD, MPH | ASTHO Chief Medical Officer

As states and territories prepare to reopen many of the functions of their economies and communities, it is also time to pivot to a new normal at health departments nationwide. COVID-19 has been the most substantive threat facing public health in decades and required an urgent mobilization and redirection of resources for all public health programs. A crisis of this proportion would stress any agency, but following a steady decrease in workforce over the past decade, public health has been hit particularly hard. We cannot expect health departments to continue pre-COVID work and continue to sustain the COVID-19 response without adequately scaling up our resources.

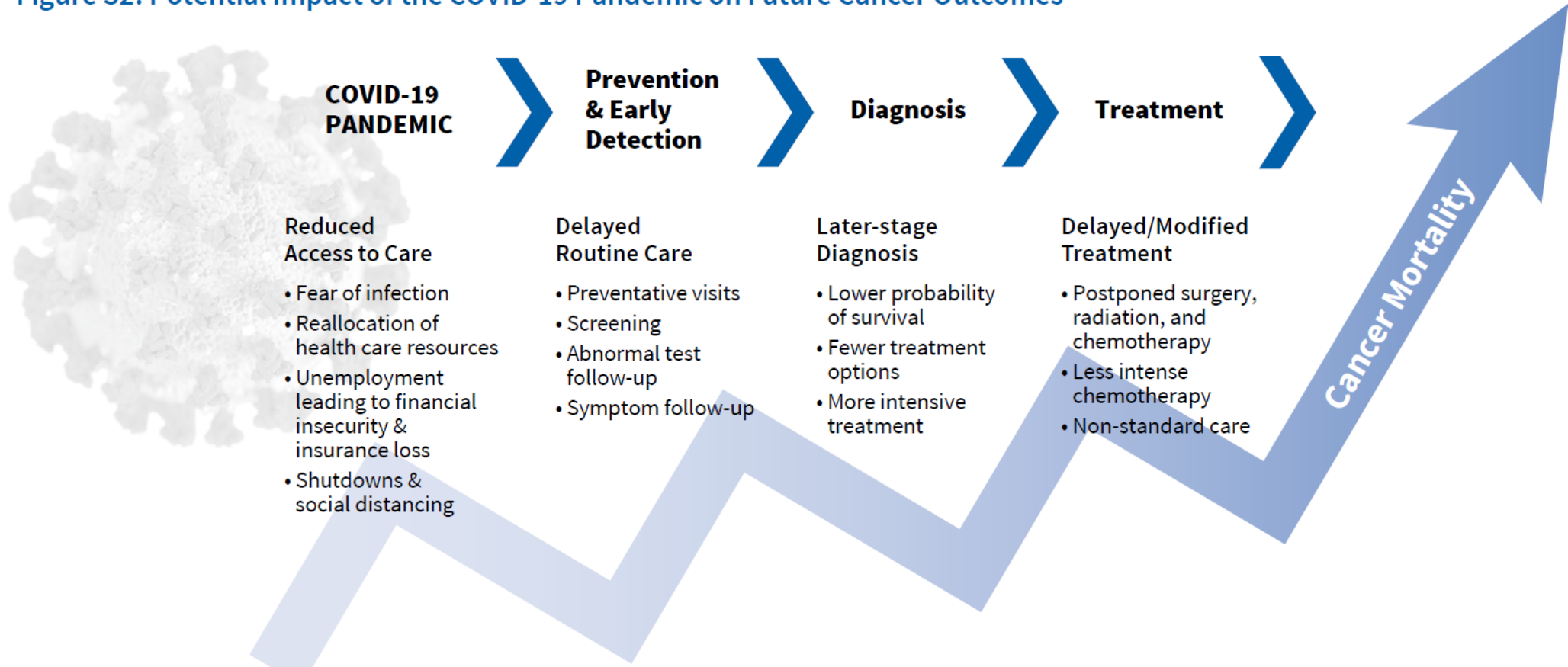


Many vital public health functions such as immunizations, chronic disease prevention, STI/HIV prevention, and the opioid overdose response have had to be scaled back in response to COVID-19. If this continues, it will soon have profound effects on the public's health, even in areas where we have previously been successful, such as tobacco cessation and childhood immunizations. The new normal in public health must be an adaptation to the need to contain and control COVID-19 while simultaneously addressing the many other public health needs in a jurisdiction. We need to adapt to the new normal, but we cannot continue to do more with less.

<https://www.astho.org/StatePublicHealth/A-New-Normal-for-Public-Health-Agencies/05-19-20/?terms=marcus+plescia>

- **Scale Up Vaccination Campaigns**
- **Prevent a Resurgence of Other Chronic Diseases**
- **Refocus on Diseases of Despair**
- **Protect the Most Vulnerable**
- **Create a New Normal**

Figure S2. Potential Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Future Cancer Outcomes



Coronavirus image courtesy of CDC.

©2021 American Cancer Society, Inc., Surveillance Research

Cancer Screenings in the U.S.

■ 2020
 ■ 2019
 ■ 2018
 ■ 2017
 - - - Mean Weekly Screening Volume 2017-Jan 19, 2020

Breast Cancer Screenings



Colon Cancer Screenings

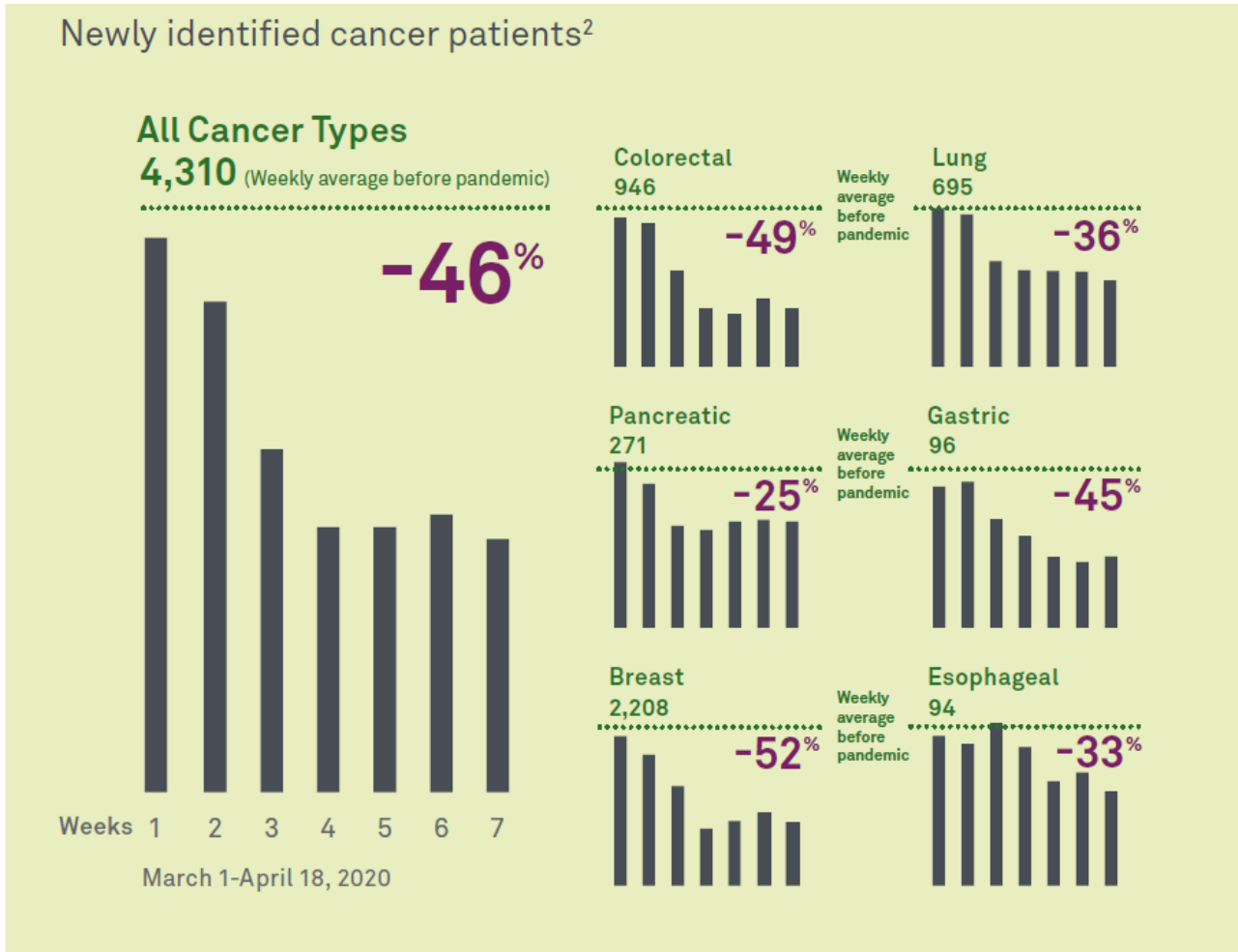


Cervical Cancer Screenings



Changes in the Number of US Patients With Newly Identified Cancer Before and During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic

Harvey W. Kaufman, MD; Zhen Chen, MS; Justin Niles, MA; Yuri Fesko, MD



An overall drop in cancer diagnoses was not just due to declines in screening, but also to delays in diagnosis of symptomatic cancers and those detected incidentally due to patients' distancing from health services

Problem Statements

Confronting alarming consequences from the COVID-19 pandemic



Increased Cancer Mortality

Pandemic-related reductions in health care access and cancer screening will result in a short-term drop in cancer diagnoses and a later corresponding increase in late-stage cancer diagnoses and preventable deaths.



Increased Disparities

The pandemic will likely exacerbate social and economic obstacles, and disproportionately affect disadvantaged and underrepresented populations.

These outcomes will be devastating and plague our work for years to come unless we respond relentlessly, emphatically, and collaboratively.

What We Know About the Covid-19 Race Gap

The CDC is finally releasing more data that show just how unequal the toll of the pandemic is. But we can't stop there.

By Zoë Carpenter

YESTERDAY 5:00 AM



'A Terrible Price': The Deadly Racial Disparities of Covid-19 in America
For the Zulu club, a black social organization in New Orleans, Mardi Gras was a joy. The coronavirus made it a tragedy.
Members of the Zulu Social Aid and Pleasure Club before a funeral procession in New Orleans. Eight weeks after Mardi Gras, eight club members had died of Covid-19. L. Kasimu Harris for The New York Times

By Linda Villarosa Photographs by L. Kasimu Harris

April 29, 2020



THE CORONAVIRUS CRISIS

Who's Hit Hardest By COVID-19? Why Obesity, Stress And Race All Matter

April 18, 2020 - 10:31 AM ET

By ALLISON AUBREY



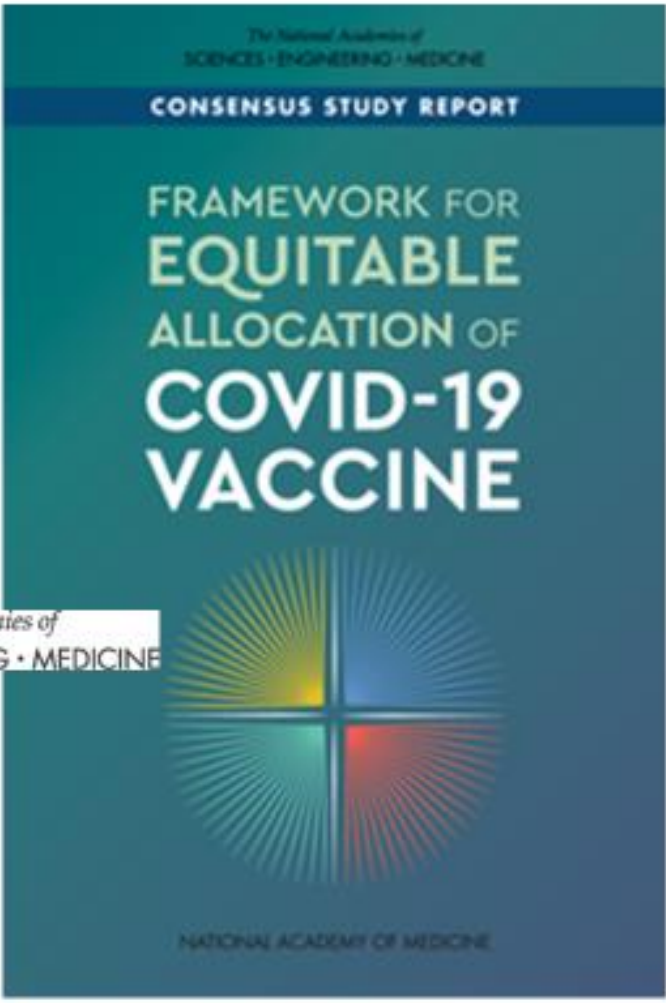
HEALTH

Who gets hospitalized for Covid-19? Report shows differences by race and sex

By ELIZABETH COONEY @cooney_ez / APRIL 9, 2020



A man walks in the Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood of New York.
MARK LERNER/HAP



Academies of
ENGINEERING • MEDICINE

**FRAMEWORK FOR
EQUITABLE
ALLOCATION OF
COVID-19
VACCINE**

Helene Gayle, William Foege, Lisa Brown, and Benjamin Kahn, *Editors*
Committee on Equitable Allocation of Vaccine for the Novel
Coronavirus

Board on Health Sciences Policy
Board on Population Health and Public Health Practice
Health and Medicine Division
A Consensus Study Report of

and
NATIONAL ACADEMY OF MEDICINE
THE NATIONAL ACADEMIES PRESS
Washington, DC
www.nap.edu



**“Demographic Characteristics of Persons
Vaccinated During the First Month of the
COVID-19 Vaccination Program — United States,
December 14, 2020–January 14, 2021”**



Public Health Strengths During the COVID-19 Response

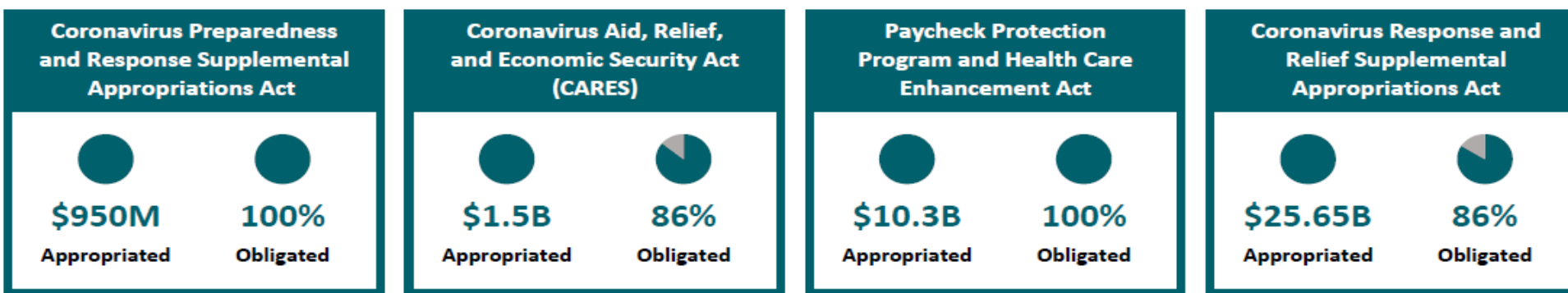
Regina Hawkins, MPH; Elizabeth Ruebush, MPH; Marcus Plescia, MD, MPH

https://journals.lww.com/jphmp/Fulltext/2021/05000/Public_Health_Strengths_During_the_COVID_19.20.aspx









Providing Essential Funding to States, Tribes, Localities, and Territories

The U.S. government has taken unprecedented action to address the public health threat posed by this new coronavirus. To accelerate response efforts, CDC received supplemental funds through four congressional acts: the [Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act](#), the [Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act](#), [Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act](#), and the [Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act](#). CDC is actively funding state, tribal, local, and territorial public health organizations to meet the challenges of this fast-moving public health threat.

Funding for States, Tribes, Localities, and Territories as of January 18, 2021

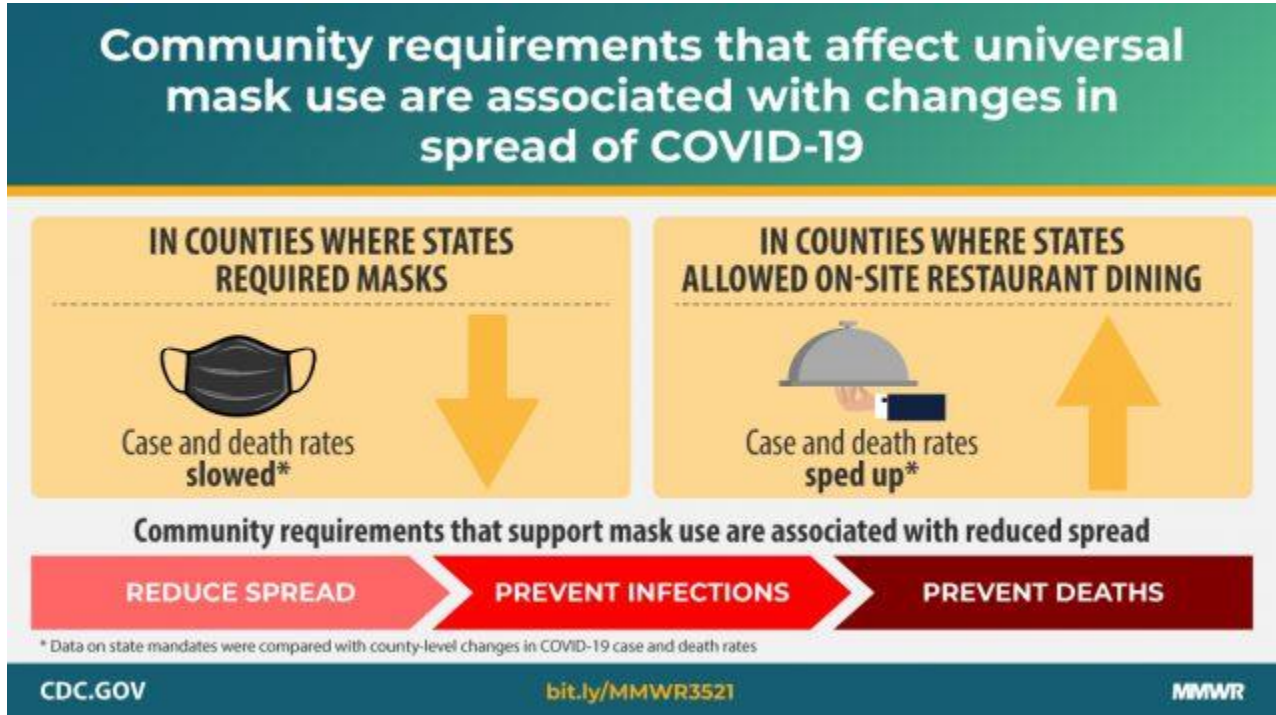


CDC's emergency supplemental funding supports a range of critical activities including:

-  Epidemiology, surveillance, and contact tracing
-  Laboratory testing and diagnostic development
-  Guidance for schools, businesses, and the workforce
-  Guidance and outreach for the public
-  Health department readiness and coordination
-  Travel health outreach and travel notices
-  Vaccine, planning, distribution, administration, monitoring, and tracking
-  Guidance, outreach, and education for health care professionals



“Association of State-Issued Mask Mandates and Allowing On-Premises Restaurant Dining with County-Level COVID-19 Case and Death Growth Rates — United States, March 1– December 31, 2020”



Top Public Health News

STAT

“Driven by the pandemic and ‘the Fauci effect,’ applicants flood public health schools”

– Mar. 17, 2021



“COVID-19 Variants Further Strain Public Health Agencies”

– Feb. 8, 2021

MEDPAGE TODAY®

“Insults, Threats of Violence Still Imperil Public Health Leaders”

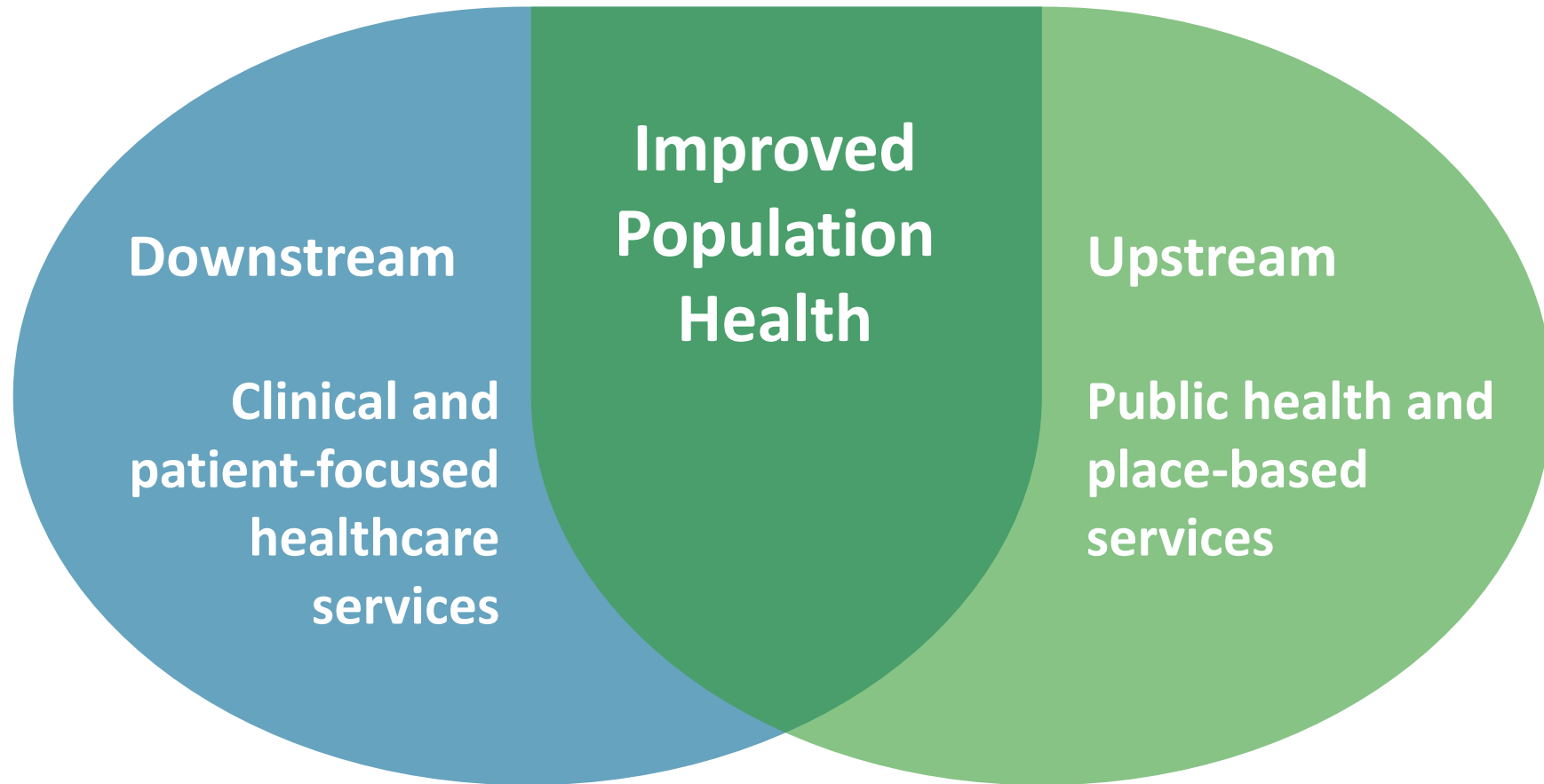
– Feb. 21, 2021



“Landmark Covid Relief Law Pumps More Than \$100 Billion Into Public Health”

– Mar. 18, 2021

State Public Health and CHWs: Opportunity to improve community to clinical connections



CHW Financing Opportunities

Provider-funded
through Core Operating
Budget/Community
Benefit

Managed Care
Contracts

Medicaid Fee Schedule

Alternative Payment
Methods and
Accountable Care
Organizations

State Plan Amendment

Sustainable CHW financing: A “Both/And” Approach

https://astho.informz.net/ASTHO/data/images/Exec%20Office%20Files/All%20SHO%20Call%20Agendas/2021/04-Apr/ELC-ReopeningSchools_webinar.pdf

- Enterprise Approach
- Interoperable
- Security to Protect Patient Data
- Workforce Preparation
- Public Private Partnerships

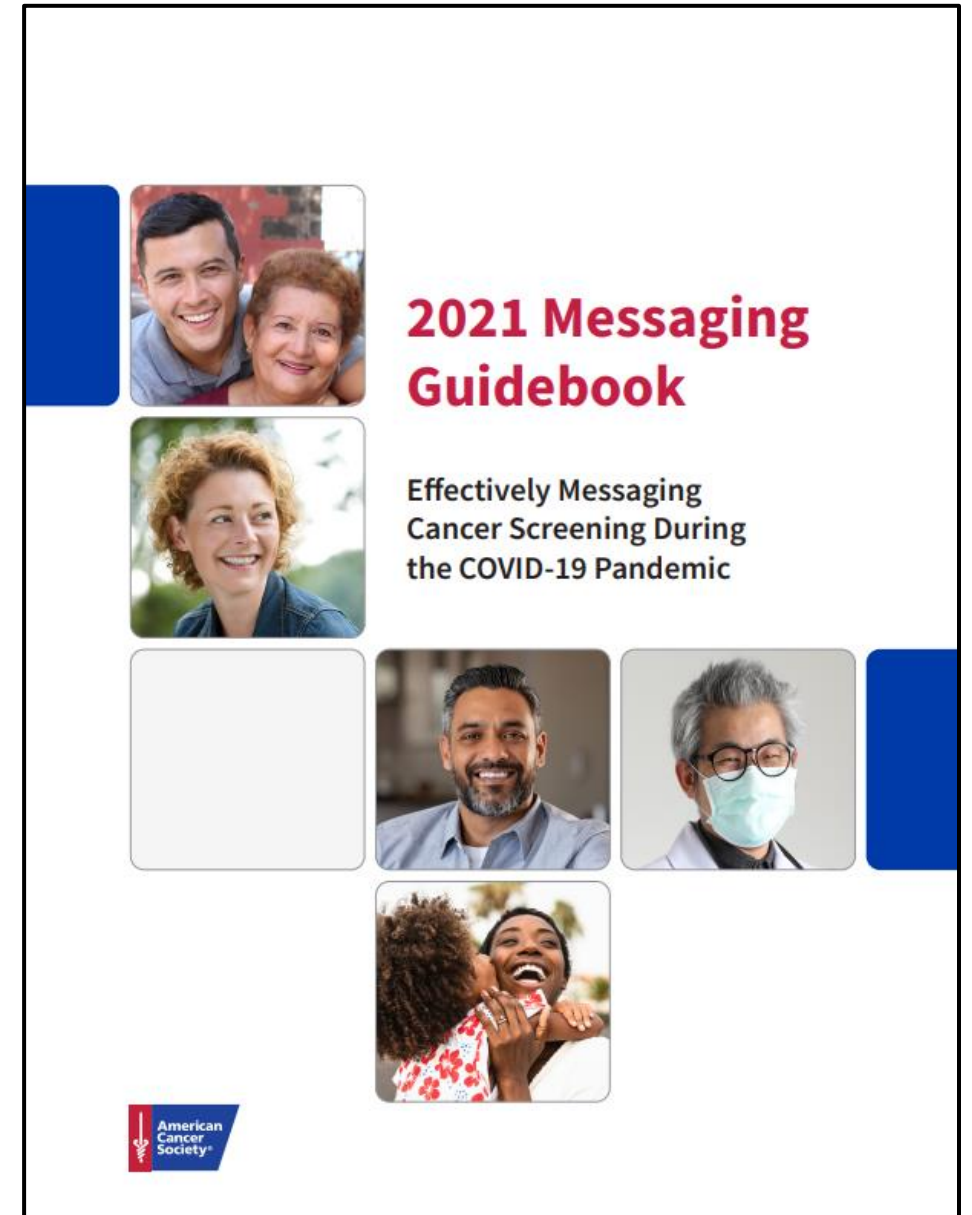


**Driving
Public Health
in the *Fast Lane***

Effectively Messaging Cancer Screening During the Pandemic

- 1 in 3 Americans will get cancer in their lifetime, but finding cancer early means it may be easier to treat.
- Screening tests increase the chance of detecting some cancers early, when they may be easier to treat.
- An estimated 41% of US adults have delayed or avoided medical care because of the pandemic. This may result in advanced disease and early deaths. Talk to your doctor about safely resuming care and next steps.

Download @ ACS4CCC.org: <https://www.acs4ccc.org/effectively-messaging-cancer-screening-during-the-covid-19-pandemic/>



The image shows the cover of a guidebook titled "2021 Messaging Guidebook: Effectively Messaging Cancer Screening During the COVID-19 Pandemic". The cover features several photographs of diverse people: a man and a woman smiling together, a woman smiling, a man smiling, a man wearing a face mask, and a woman hugging a child. The American Cancer Society logo is in the bottom left corner. The cover has blue decorative bars on the left and right sides.

2021 Messaging Guidebook

Effectively Messaging Cancer Screening During the COVID-19 Pandemic

American Cancer Society

