

More than 50 million Americans or 1 in 6 individuals, report having a disability. As the nation's population ages, these numbers are expected to grow.

CDC Building State Capacity: To promote the Health of People with Disabilities

ADDRESSING DISABILITIES THROUGH PUBLIC HEALTH

People with disabilities face many barriers to good health. A disability is a long-term limitation in mobility, cognition, vision, or hearing. Studies show that individuals with disabilities are more likely than people without disabilities to report:

- ▶ Poorer overall health.
- ▶ Less access to adequate health care.
- ▶ Engaging in risky health behaviors, including smoking and physical inactivity.

People with disabilities are often more susceptible to preventable health problems that decrease their overall health and quality of life. Such secondary conditions as pain, fatigue, obesity, and depression can occur as a result of having a disabling condition.

Health disparities and secondary conditions can be the result of inaccessible health care facilities and equipment, lack of knowledge among health care professionals, transportation difficulties, and higher poverty rates among people with disabilities. For instance, health care professionals may not be able to communicate effectively with their patients who have a hearing loss or an intellectual disability. And a person who uses a wheelchair or has mobility limitations might have difficulty finding an accessible medical facility for screening and exams.

Public health organizations and people with disabilities must work together to remove barriers to health and prevent secondary conditions. CDC's disability and health programs work to inform policy and practice at the state level; they include health promotion activities and surveillance of health disparities.

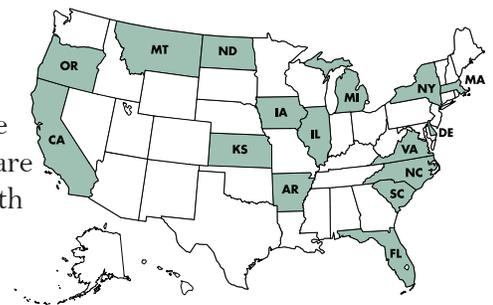


BUILDING STATE CAPACITY TO PROMOTE HEALTH AND WELLNESS

CDC supports **16 state-based programs** with the ultimate goal of improving health, well-being, independence, productivity, and full societal participation among persons with disabilities. These programs ensure that individuals with disabilities are included in ongoing state disease prevention, health promotion, and emergency response activities.

Each program customizes its activities to meet its state's needs, which broadens expertise and information sharing among states. Specifically, the programs support:

- ▶ Efforts to eliminate barriers to health care and improve access to routine preventive services for underserved populations with disabilities.
- ▶ Health promotion interventions aimed at improving health and well-being. One such intervention, *Living Well with a Disability*, has seen not only health benefits, but also a savings of up to \$1,000 per person in healthcare cost.
- ▶ Data collection on the prevalence of disabilities and secondary conditions, and the health status of persons with disabilities.



Adults with disabilities face challenges in:

▶ **Employment** – Half as many adults with disabilities are employed as those without disabilities (35% versus 78%).

▶ **Economic status** – Three times as many adults with disabilities live in poverty with annual household incomes below \$15,000 (26% versus 9%).

▶ **Transportation & health care** – Adults with disabilities are twice as likely as those without disabilities to have inadequate transportation (31% versus 13%), and a much higher percentage go without needed health care (18% versus 7%). (From the 2004 nationwide Harris Survey)

- ▶ Leadership for the development and implementation of policies and practices that can increase the accessibility of public health and clinical care.
- ▶ Livable communities to improve physical and social accessibility.
- ▶ Training for professionals and paraprofessionals on the care and health promotion of people with disabilities.
- ▶ Partnering with state or local disaster preparedness and emergency response programs to address disability issues

INVESTING IN STATE -BASED EXPERTISE

CDC-funded programs are located in state health departments and academic centers in **Arkansas, California, Delaware, Florida, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Massachusetts, Michigan, Montana, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oregon, South Carolina, and Virginia.**

Following are examples of activities in some of the funded states:

Arkansas is promoting breast cancer awareness and encouraging recommended screening among women 40 years and older who have a disability.

California has promoted policies and interventions to help remove physical and social barriers to routine preventive care for people with disabilities. The state is also continuing to improve the prevention of secondary conditions.

Florida is increasing capacity of health care professionals to provide quality health care to persons with disabilities throughout the state by providing training for medical and allied health professionals.

Iowa is developing a statewide network of community providers that offer *Living Well with a Disability*, a health promotion workshop for adults with physical disabilities and other chronic conditions.

Massachusetts has worked with health care professionals to assess facilities and services to promote compliance with the Americans with Disability Act. They have already increased the accessibility of mammography and substance abuse facilities.

North Carolina is conducting epidemiological planning that includes people with disabilities. The state facilitates the collection, analysis, and dissemination of data on persons with disabilities to better understand health status, health behaviors, and health care use.

New York provides technical assistance and training to help in implementing a systemwide policy to promote persons with disabilities in all future funding announcements. The needs of people with disabilities will be represented in all activities funded through the community health office.

Oregon is promoting the involvement of people with disabilities in state emergency response planning by training first responders and other emergency personnel, and providing tools to help them meet the needs of people with disabilities.

ENHANCING EXISTING STATE PROGRAMS

Evidence shows that state-based efforts to address disability as a public health issue have been successful in improving quality of life. CDC can further improve the health of persons with disabilities by continuing to invest in programs that develop state capacity to address the needs of this population.

