



Background

- Community health assessments, health impact assessments, strategic planning, and evidence-based approaches are tools boards of health should use to develop health policies.
- Policy analysis investigates how and why policies are proposed or implemented, and policy advocacy makes recommendations for the best course of action.
- Developing policy should include problem definition, issue formation, hearing alternative proposals, policy adoption, and policy implementation.
- Boards of health are authorized by state statutes to govern public health, including adopting public health policies, issuing rules and ordinances, hiring and evaluating personnel, and adjudicating appeals.
- If officials are “acting in good faith” and conscientious about doing their jobs, they generally have some protection from liability under the law.
- A public nuisance is any activity that adversely affects the public’s health, morals, safety, welfare, or comforts.
- Important concepts to understand in property law are eminent domain, which is the right of the government to take land for public purposes; easement, which is a legal right to use or traverse someone else’s land; covenants, which are restrictions of property that “run with the land”; and zoning, which is a government activity that affects property use.

Board of Health Actions

- Advise about and create policy that has widespread interest and impacts throughout the community.
- Enforce rules and ordinances that are adopted and make sure adequate resources and personnel are available to implement the rules.
- Advocate for public health support.
- Make sure boards have communication tools in place to inform, educate, and empower people about health issues.

Resources for Continuing Education

- Community Guide to Preventative Services. Available at www.thecommunityguide.org/
- Fallon, F., Jr., and Zgodzinski, E. (2009). *Essentials of Public Health Management*.
- Ferrey, S. (2010). *Environmental Law: Examples and Explanations*.
- National Association of Local Boards of Health. (2011). Management Tools: Environmental Policy, Law, and Administration. In *The Local Board of Health Environmental Health Primer* (2nd ed.).