



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Idaho Public Health Districts



Why the Healthy Idaho Plan is Important to Central District Health Department

COMMUNITY NEED

The vision of Idaho's Local Public Health Districts is Healthy People in Healthy Communities. One of the 10 essential services of public health is to link people to needed personal health services and assure the provision of health care when otherwise unavailable. Almost every day we see patients in our clinics with health needs far greater than the services we can provide.

Our focus is on prevention, and in an ideal world, this is all the health care our communities would need. However, that is not the reality. The reality is that we are all afflicted with health conditions at some point in our lives that require acute and chronic care by specialists. As an example, when a patient walks through our doors and we detect a potential cancer through a physical examination, with limited income and no health insurance, these people have nowhere to go. Ultimately, many will end up in emergency rooms seeking care for a late stage serious health condition that could have otherwise been diagnosed, treated, and in many instances cured. That care is far more expensive than early diagnosis and treatment, and the outcomes are far less favorable.

PATIENTS FALL IN THE COVERAGE GAP

More than half of our patients fall in the coverage gap. The majority are from working families. Idaho has an option to provide health insurance coverage for all of our citizens called the Healthy Idaho Plan. The Plan incorporates the key concepts developed by Governor Otter's Workgroup on Medicaid Expansion, including personal accountability. A major provision of the Workgroup's recommendation is that Idaho's service delivery system be redesigned. This redesign would shift provider incentives from volume of visits to value of care by creating provider payment incentives to keep people healthy. This is underway as part of Idaho's \$39.5 million Statewide Healthcare Innovation Plan (SHIP) grant. Goal 6 of SHIP is to align payment mechanisms across payers to transform payment methodology from volume to value. Idaho's Local Public Health Districts serve as the SHIP Regional Collaboratives with the primary responsibility to support provider practices as they transform to Patient Centered Medical Homes and create medical/health neighborhoods. We are improving health care for those who have health insurance, but 78,000 Idahoans will continue to be excluded from our health care system beyond basic primary care offered through limited safety net providers.

SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM

There are ideas that are being offered as solutions to the coverage gap such as a proposal by the Department of Health and Welfare called Primary Care Access Plan (PCAP). PCAP is a care coordination proposal that does little to increase access to primary care and offers no help for individuals who have conditions that are identified by the primary care clinician that require a specialist. Emergency care under this proposal for the gap population will continue to be funded by Idaho's taxpayers through the county medically indigent program and state catastrophic health care cost program.

We have many public health challenges facing our state. Finding solutions to scenarios such as rising obesity, low childhood immunization coverage, and some of the highest suicide and prescription drug abuse rates in the country, can seem insurmountable. We have an answer for closing the health insurance coverage gap that will improve the health of Idahoans, provide more efficient and cost-effective health care, and reduce the burden on taxpayers. It is called the Healthy Idaho Plan. **At Central District Health, we want everyone in our communities to be healthy, not just those with adequate resources.**