

Public Health centers on community's health

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What is public health? Public Health, as opposed to private health, focuses on the health of the community. You can eat in public restaurants, drink from city water supplies, and be sure your neighbors are not spreading small pox because of public health.

Did you know that life expectancy has increased 30 years since 1900? Public health prevention programs are responsible for 25 years; only five years are due to improvements in medical care.

In Apache County, public health programs work to keep the community safe and clean through our twenty programs. To name a few we offer free, or low cost, services such as:

- ❖ home health care for seniors,
- ❖ food coupons for pregnant women and families with small children,
- ❖ immunizations,
- ❖ sexual health services (including pregnancy tests, pap smears, and STD testing),
- ❖ family planning (birth control),
- ❖ car-seats and safety training for families,
- ❖ tobacco cessation services,
- ❖ home visits for women with high-risk pregnancies,
- ❖ child development tools,
- ❖ breast-feeding consultations,
- ❖ after-school teen program, and
- ❖ school-based drug, alcohol, and tobacco prevention classes.

Public Health also works with restaurants to make sure they follow the Arizona Food Code. We work with health care providers to collect disease data. And we partner with other agencies to make sure Apache County is prepared in case of a public health emergency.

Recently, public health took over administration of Vital Records (specifically death records) and the Medical Examiner for Apache County. In the first eight months of the vital records program, our office issued over 900 certified copies of death certificates! By taking on this program we have decreased the wait time for death certificates from over four weeks to only eleven days.

Public Health has also invested resources in infrastructure improvements in the past year. In July of 2008, four small public health offices were combined into one at 323 S. Mountain Ave. in Springerville. This improved facility has made referrals between programs more simple. Further, we now have a "one-stop-shop" for our clients. The new building has also reduced the need to rent space and results in savings for taxpayers.

Public Health services exist for the benefit of all. We are always looking for ways to improve our services and serve the public more efficiently. If you would like more

information about public health, please check out our webpage at
<http://www.co.apache.az.us/Departments/HealthDepartment/HealthDept.htm>