

SA Health Public Health Directorate Strategic Plan



2007 – 2009



Government of South Australia
Department of Health



Foreword from the Executive Director Public Health and Clinical Coordination

Public health is dedicated to preserving, protecting and promoting good health and preventing illness and injury.

In South Australia the public health function is spread across many different agencies in the state and local government sectors, as well as the non-government and private sectors.

While public health is on the agenda of different sections, divisions and agencies within SA Health, the principal and coordinating focus is the Directorate of Public Health in the Public Health and Clinical Coordination Division.

This Public Health Strategic Plan encompasses the work of the Directorate.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christopher J. Baggoley". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Professor Chris Baggoley

Executive Director
Public Health and Clinical Coordination
2007



Vision

SA Health Vision

The best health for South Australians.

Mission

SA Health Mission

SA Health will lead and deliver a comprehensive and sustainable health system that aims to ensure healthier, longer and better lives for all South Australians.

We will achieve our aims by:

- Strengthening primary health care
- Enhancing hospital care
- Reforming mental health care
- Improving the health of Aboriginal people.

We are committed to a health system that produces positive health outcomes by focussing on health promotion, illness prevention and early intervention.

We will work with other government agencies and the community to address the environmental, socioeconomic, biological and behavioural determinants of health and to achieve equitable health outcomes for all South Australians.

Public Health Directorate



The Public Health Directorate will support the SA Health vision and contribute to the achievement of its mission by:

- Focussing on SA Health's Strategic Direction 1: Strengthening primary health care.

In addition the Directorate will, directly and in partnership, contribute to the vision and mission by:

- Promoting healthy people, communities and environments
- Protecting the health of the public
- Preventing communicable and other acute and chronic disease
- Improving health equity.

Roles & Functions of the Public Health Directorate



The Public Health Directorate consists of a number of specialist units each focussing on specific areas of protecting and promoting public health and preventing illness and injury.

These units are:

- Applied Environmental Health Branch
- Communicable Disease Control Branch
- Food Policy and Programs Branch
- Health Promotion Branch (including the SA Cervix Screening Program)
- Scientific Services Branch.

While these Branches focus on their specific areas, together they form an integrated public health effort responding to the complex public health challenges which arise for the South Australian population.

Our public health effort is strengthened, and we can achieve best health for South Australians, by coordinating and integrating our efforts within SA Health, and collaborating with our public health partners across all levels of government, non-government and the community.

Public Health Legislation



Legislative Context

The Public Health Directorate operates within a defined legislative context. The principal legislation governing the work of the Directorate includes:

- The Public and Environmental Health Act (1987)
- South Australian Health Commission Act (1976)
- The Food Act (2001)
- Controlled Substances Act (1984)
- Tobacco Products Regulation Act (1997)

In addition, there are many other Acts of Parliament which either explicitly or implicitly contribute to preserving, protecting and promoting public health.

The Public Health Directorate works with other government agencies and local government to advise and assist them in fulfilling their public health obligations under their legislation.

Public Health Policy Context



The major policy context which shapes our strategic thinking, actions and priority setting is:

- **South Australia's Strategic Plan**

... in particular those targets assigned to SA Health:

T2.1 Smoking

T2.2 Healthy weight

T2.4 Healthy South Australians

T2.5 Aboriginal healthy life expectancy

T2.6 Chronic diseases

T2.7 Psychological wellbeing

T6.3 Early childhood

- **SA Health's Strategic Plan 2007-2009**

While these are the major policy drivers, the Public Health Directorate contributes to the development of, and has responsibility for the implementation of other national and state policies which protect the health of the public, prevent ill health and injury and promote good health.

Strategic Direction 1: Strengthen Primary Health Care



The Public Health Directorate is committed to a primary health care approach that encompasses the social, economic, cultural, behavioural and biological determinants of health.

Key objectives

- 1.1** Provide effective avenues for prevention and early intervention
- 1.2** Minimise the burden of disease on the health system.

Strategies

- Contribute to the reduction of chronic disease by integrating primary and secondary prevention strategies into the health system
- Build the capacity of the health system to recognise and respond to communicable disease threats
- Reduce the burden of health care-associated infection by measuring the incidence and monitoring effectiveness of interventions.

Performance measures

- Appropriate information and advice on primary and secondary prevention is provided in relation to planning and implementation of the Out of Hospital Strategy
- Appropriate information and advice on best practice in communicable disease control is provided
- Health care-associated infections are monitored and data is made available.

Strategic Direction 2: Promoting Healthy People, Communities and Environments



The Public Health Directorate takes a population health approach which is focussed on whole populations rather than on the treatment of individuals. We promote good health and prevent illness.

The Directorate will work cooperatively with other agencies and the community to promote and support healthy lifestyles and behaviours through action with individuals, families, communities and wider society.

Key objectives

- 2.1** Encourage the development of healthy public policy
- 2.2** Encourage the development of built environments that support the health and wellbeing of the community
- 2.3** Increase the capacity of individuals and communities to make healthy dietary and physical activity choices
- 2.4** Increase the proportion of the population in the healthy weight range
- 2.5** Increase the proportion of women who have cervical screening in line with national guidelines.

Strategic Direction 2: Promoting Healthy People, Communities and Environments



Strategies

- Contribute to the development of a health in all policies approach in SA
- Contribute to healthy urban environments by developing the capacity for health impact assessments
- Support and advocate health promoting policies, practices and standards at national and state levels
- Implement the Right from the Start program to support healthy eating and active play in children under 5 years old
- Effectively manage the implementation and monitoring of the Healthy Weight Strategy
- Implement programs to maximise cervical screening with a focus on underscreened groups of women.

Performance measures

- A series of recommendations about progressing health in all policies is developed and presented to Cabinet
- Collaborative agreements are in place between SA Health, other agencies and local government for health impact assessments of policy initiatives and development proposals
- Healthy weight related strategies consistent with the SASP target implementation plan and Eat Well Be Active are progressed in a timely manner and within budget
- Cervix Screening Program evaluation shows improved screening rates, in particular for underscreened women.

Strategic Direction 3: Protecting the Health of the Public



The Public Health Directorate is committed to protecting the health of South Australians by preventing, minimising and containing adverse health effects from unsafe food and water, other environmental hazards, and risky behaviours.

Key objectives

- 3.1** Develop and administer public health legislation and policy which prevent, minimise or contain a range of environmental hazards
- 3.2** Assist local government to achieve their public health legislative and policy responsibilities
- 3.3** Ensure safety and suitability of the food supply
- 3.4** Prevent public harm from physical, chemical and microbial hazards in the environment.

Strategies

- Develop, implement and review appropriate public health legislation
- Provide guidance to local government in monitoring and enforcing public health legislation
- Effectively manage food safety incidents, including recalls, and compliance with food safety, labelling and composition standards
- Prevent acute foodborne illness by requiring audited food safety programs in food businesses that serve vulnerable populations
- Monitor trends in communicable disease, and identify and respond to outbreaks
- Contribute to the prevention of biological, physical and chemical hazards through applied research, education and promotion
- In collaboration with the EPA prevent public harm from contaminated sites and from exposure to pollutants

Strategic Direction 3: Protecting the Health of the Public



Strategies (continued)

- Reduce exposure to environmental tobacco smoke by developing and implementing a tobacco enforcement plan
- Implement the Framework for Drinking Water Quality Management and the Community Water Planner
- Reduce harm from poisons by enhancing and implementing strategies for the sale, purchase, storage and use of scheduled chemicals
- In collaboration with Country Health SA, reduce exposure to lead in children in Port Pirie by endeavoring to ensure strategies implemented under the 'ten by 10' strategy are evidence-based.

Performance measures

- Incidents of public and environmental health risk are reported in line with specified reporting protocols
- Public and environmental health risks are clearly identified and action plans recommended for resolution or control
- Food contamination outbreaks and incidents are identified and contained in compliance with national standards
- Food samples are analysed for compliance with standards
- Food recalls are effectively coordinated
- All food safety programs in hospitals and delivered meals organisations are audited
- Accurate public health risk intelligence is provided
- SA participates in all national health protection measures
- Licences are administered with required timeframes
- Timely and accurate reports of blood lead levels in children in Port Pirie are provided to Country Health SA.

Strategic Direction 4: Preventing Communicable and other Acute and Chronic Disease



The Public Health Directorate is committed to preventing, minimising and containing adverse health effects from communicable diseases and disease outbreaks. We play a role in acute disease prevention. We contribute to the prevention of chronic disease by identifying factors that contribute to poor health and modifying, reducing or eliminating them.

Key objectives

- 4.1** Reduce morbidity and mortality associated with vaccine preventable diseases, and control and eliminate these diseases
- 4.2** Reduce the incidence of blood-borne viruses and other communicable diseases
- 4.3** Maximise the prevention of chronic disease through policy and program initiatives that address the determinants of health.

Strategies

- Contribute to state and national public health policy development and standards
- Coordinate the SA component of the National Immunisation program encompassing childhood, adolescent and adult schedules
- Develop and implement the immunisation component of the Pandemic Response Action Management Plan

Strategic Direction 4: Preventing Communicable and other Acute and Chronic Disease



Strategies (continued)

- Develop and implement policies to reduce the incidence and impact of HIV and HCV
- Implement best practice control measures, including education and advisory services, to minimise the incidence of communicable disease
- Continue implementation of South Australia's Integrated Mosquito Management Strategy.

Performance measures

- SA participates in all national public health policy initiatives
- Maintain current high immunisation coverage rates
- The immunisation component of the Pandemic Response Action Management Plan is implemented
- Communicable disease surveillance data are available and accessible
- Communicable disease outbreaks are responded to appropriately
- Respond to all proposed amendments to the Food Standards Code relating to food safety and the prevention of diet-related diseases
- South Australia's Integrated Mosquito Management Strategy is implemented
- HIV and HCV policies are developed and implemented.

Strategic Direction 5: Improving Health Equity



The Public Health Directorate will support health system actions for reducing health inequities through a focus on the broad determinants of health.

Key objectives

- 5.1** Increase SA Health's capacity to monitor health inequity and promote equitable health outcomes
- 5.2** Contribute to the improvement of the health of Indigenous and other disadvantaged and vulnerable communities.

Strategies

- Monitor and support SA Health's implementation of SASP health equity actions
- Improve monitoring and surveillance of infectious disease in Indigenous communities
- In partnership with other stakeholders increase access to testing, treatment and health promotion for sexually transmitted infections and other infectious diseases in Indigenous communities

Strategic Direction 5: Improving Health Equity



Strategies (continued)

- Increase vaccine coverage levels in Indigenous and other disadvantaged and vulnerable communities
- Develop and implement a plan for Indigenous Environmental Health
- Work with appropriate organisations to support the vaccinations of newly arrived refugees.

Performance measures

- An Environmental Health Plan is being implemented in the APY Lands
- Increased rates of immunisation in Indigenous and newly arrived refugee communities
- SA Health is addressing the SASP equity actions.

Strategic Enablers



In addition to the Strategic Enablers in the SA Health Strategic Plan, the Public Health Directorate will implement the following strategies to support the implementation of the Public Health Strategic Plan:

1. Safety and quality of services

- Develop, implement and maintain effective information management systems to support public health
- Undertake emergency response planning, including developing a surge capacity.

2. Health workforce

- Focus on building the capacity of organisations for improving public health outcomes
- Enhance the research, education and training effort by fostering partnerships with educational and research institutions in public health
- Develop and implement a Leadership Development Program in public health
- Foster a work environment that supports creativity, innovation and a culture of teamwork and public health leadership.

Strategic Enablers



3. Accountability

- Ensure budget allocations are well managed and aligned to public health priorities
- Seek the views of stakeholders to inform policy, programs and legislation, as appropriate
- Develop and implement a risk management plan as part of the Department-wide risk management plan
- Ensure managers and staff understand organisation-wide levels of authority, accountability and delegations
- Ensure performance reporting processes are accurate and transparent
- Ensure the enforcement of public health legislation is fair, consistent and always mindful of policy objectives.

4. Partnerships

- Build partnerships and collaborate across sectors and with government and non-government agencies to influence public health outcomes
- Foster community participation in identifying issues, developing programs and policies and evaluating their impact
- Support stakeholders involvement in the development of regulations and the implementation of legislative change.

Cross-cutting Public Health Projects



The Public Health Directorate will work on a range of cross-cutting projects designed to improve the overall functioning of the public health effort in this state. These include:

1. Law Reform

Progressive law reform to ensure that public health legislation is modernised and aligned to meeting public health challenges of the 21st century.

2. Red Tape Reduction

Ensuring that public health regulations are the minimum necessary to achieve good health protection and promotion. Ensuring that the regulatory framework is comprehensible and efficiently administered to provide an environment which promotes an economically and ecologically sustainable environment for South Australia.

3. Public Health Emergency Planning

Contribute to SA Health's public health emergency planning including for pandemics.

4. Role and Function Review

Develop a clear and contemporary role and function statement for the Public Health Directorate consistent with the National Public Health Partnership statement of core functions together with other internationally recognised definitions of public health.

This will provide the public health effort with role clarity and will be a valuable tool for priority setting and operational planning and management.

