

## What is the status of local public health system development in NH?

As of 2006, the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services has funded 14 Public Health Networks. A few Public Health Networks include well established city health departments. These networks benefit from the additional resources and staff expertise available through the health department. While networks vary in terms of their governance and structure, where specific authorities are vested and how particular services are delivered, they all have the same mission and service requirements.

**Building local partnerships:** The initial focus of all Public Health Networks is to build collaborative relationships with community partners. Networks have succeeded in recruiting the broad public health interests in the community, many of whom have not traditionally considered themselves part of the public health system. Together these partners give the Public Health Network the authority to enforce public health laws and regulations and the capacity to plan for and implement health and safety initiatives:

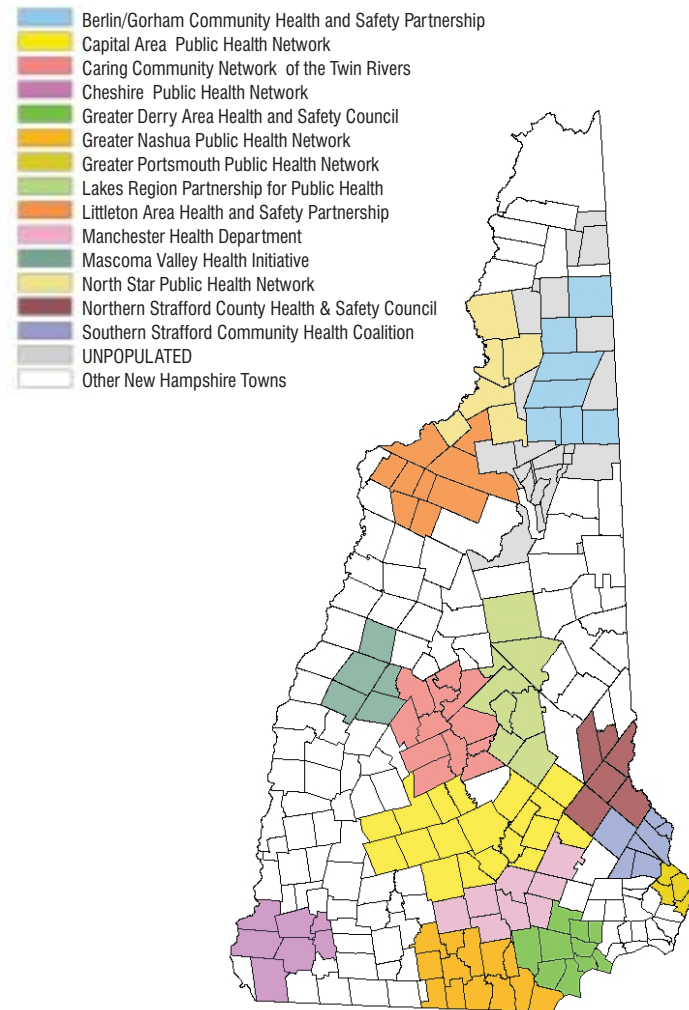
- Municipal government (elected officials)
- Public safety (policy, fire, emergency medical services, public works)
- Public health (local health department, Health Officer)
- Education (schools, universities)
- Health care services (hospitals, health centers, health care providers)
- Community based organizations (transportation, social service agencies, civic organizations)
- Business
- Media
- Faith community

**Identifying and addressing public health needs:** All Public Health Networks conduct comprehensive assessments of their public health systems and community health status. These assessments result in goals and strategies for strengthening the local public health system and improving community health and safety, which are detailed in *Public Health Improvement Plans*. Public Health Networks will integrate their local public health improvement plans with the upcoming State's Improvement Plan.

For more information about the Public Health Networks, see [www.nhphn.org](http://www.nhphn.org)

The Public Health Networks provide a proven model for building local public health capacity. By coordinating the enforcement authority of the municipalities with public health services provided by public and private organizations at the state and local level, New Hampshire maximizes available resources and eliminates duplication. Through the Public Health Networks, all partners have gained a better understanding of the job of local public health and the potential for collaboration in promoting and protecting the public's health. Despite their brief history, the Public Health Networks have made substantial progress in preparing their communities for public health threats and are better positioned to mount a timely public health response.

### New Hampshire Public Health Networks



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## Developing a Local Public Health Infrastructure: New Hampshire's Public Health Networks

*New Hampshire is building a local public health system to assure a timely and comprehensive response to public health threats. Recent events – floods, hurricanes, terrorist attacks and emerging infectious diseases such as avian flu and Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) – demonstrate the critical need for a strong public health infrastructure. These events underscore the adage that “all emergencies are local,” each requiring an effective local public health capacity to protect our residents.*

### What is the job of local public health?

Public Health is responsible for creating and maintaining conditions that keep people healthy.

The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) define the job of the local public health system in terms of the services that need to be performed – the 10 Essential Services of Public Health.

1. Monitor health status to identify community problems.
2. Diagnose and investigate health problems and health hazards in the community.
3. Inform, educate, and empower people about health issues.
4. Mobilize community partnerships and action to identify and solve health problems.
5. Develop policies and plans that support individual and community health efforts.
6. Enforce laws and regulations that protect health and ensure safety.
7. Link people to needed services and assure the provision of health care.
8. Assure a competent public health and personal health care workforce.
9. Evaluate effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of personal and population-based health services.
10. Research for new insights and innovative solutions to health problems.

### What is the local public health system?

NACCHO and CDC also conclude that the optimal public health response requires all entities that contribute to the health and safety in the community act in coordination. Together these entities make up the local public health system. These may include public, private, and voluntary entities as well as individuals and informal associations. Central to any public health system is a governmental public health presence which derives its authority and responsibility from the state and local laws that govern them.

*NACCHO defines the governmental public health presence at the local level as any arrangement that has governmental authority and is responsible for public health functions at the local level.*

According to NACCHO, the national association representing the nation's local public health agencies, this governmental public health presence can take many forms. They vary in terms of governance and structure, where specific authorities are vested and how particular services are delivered.

### Public Health Networks have taken a lead role in:

- Conducting an assessment of the local public health system
- Assessing the health status of the community and identifying areas for improvement
- Educating the public about public health threats such as avian flu
- Training the public health workforce
- Developing regional public health all hazards plans
- Assisting local municipalities to improve health and medical emergency operations plans
- Producing regional *Public Health Improvement Plans*
- Coordinating funding for and implementation of regional health improvement initiatives
- Responding to widespread regional and local public health emergencies

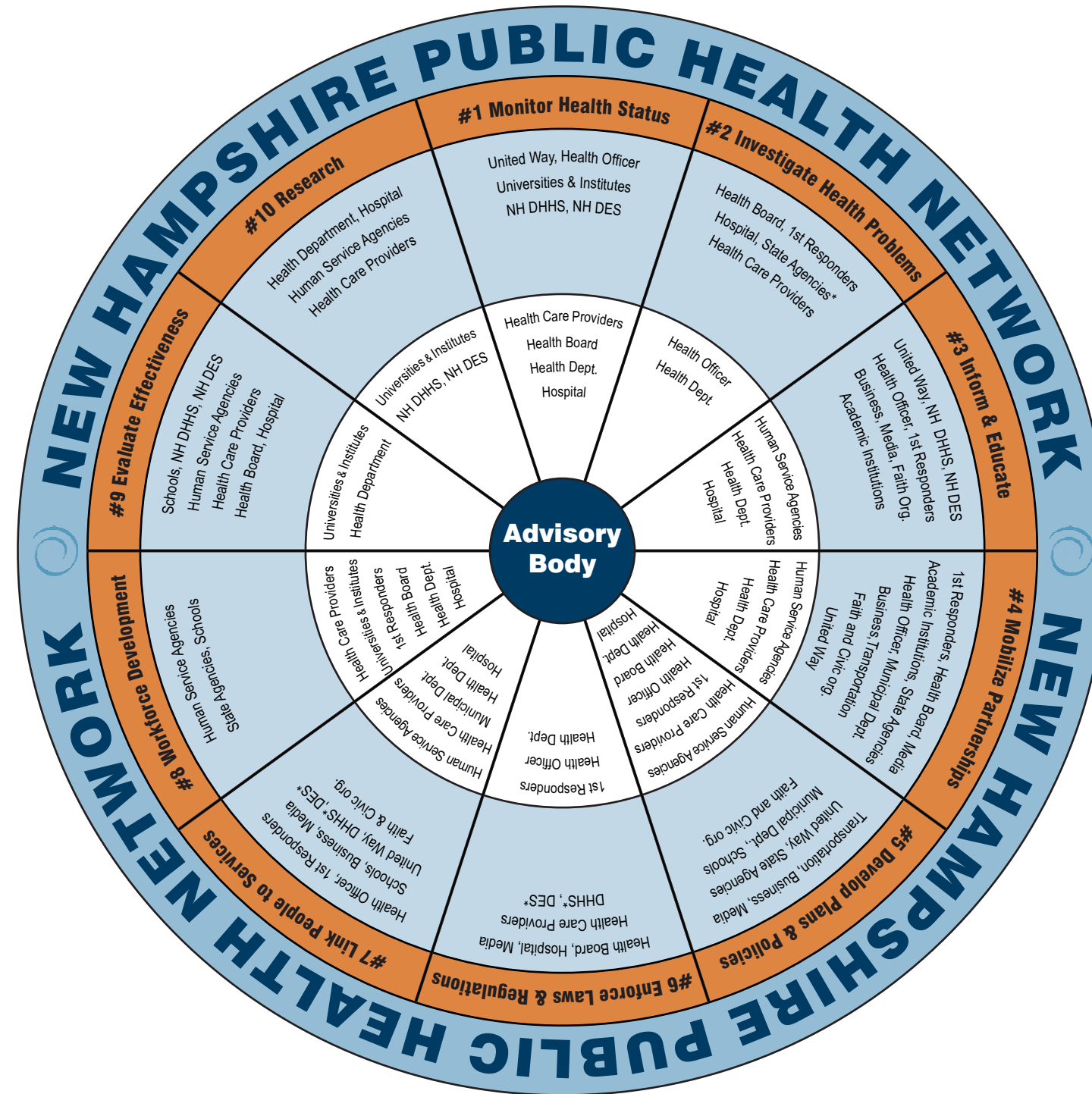
# What is New Hampshire's vision for local public health?

The New Hampshire Public Health Networks were established in recognition of the fact that today's complex health challenges require the involvement of many diverse partners to meet them. With the Public Health Network, New Hampshire is working to develop regional collaborations of organizations involved in promoting and protecting the health and safety of residents to meet these challenges. Furthermore, because most towns in New Hampshire lack the population and resources to operate a comprehensive health department on their own, the Public Health Network can harness and more effectively engage and utilize available public health resources to assure the provision of the 10 Essential Services of Public Health.

To assure a coordinated and collaborative approach, Public Health Networks are guided by a governing or advisory body which provides direction, facilitates coordination and monitors progress towards improvement goals. Where local resources and expertise are not available, the network facilitates access to these services from state agencies. In fulfilling these mandates, each Public Health Network must build on available resources in the community and respond to the unique problems impacting the health and well-being of its residents.

## The public can expect their Public Health Networks to:

- Establish an advisory board which is broadly representative of the public health interests in the community to set direction and monitor progress towards health and safety improvement goals.
- Include the local governmental entity which has accountability for the public's health.
- Assure the delivery of the 10 Essential Services of Public Health.
- Promote a regional approach to public health emergency preparedness and health improvement.
- Coordinate the actions of the broad public health interests in the community to affect public health improvement and assure the safety of all residents.
- Serve as liaison with State and regional public health agencies in coordinating local planning and response to public health threats.
- Seek resources to support public health planning and programs from state, local and private sources.



**“Government has a unique responsibility to promote and protect the health of the people built on a constitutional, theoretical and practical foundation. However, government public health agencies alone cannot assure the nation’s health.... There is growing recognition that individuals, communities, and various social institutions can form powerful collaborative relationships to improve health that government alone cannot replicate.”**

- Institute of Medicine, *The Future of the Public's Health in the 21st Century*, 2003

The term *public health system* describes a complex network of individuals and organizations working in tandem to foster the conditions for community health. While the component parts of a potential system can act for health individually, when they work together to achieve a health goal, they act as a true system - a public health system.

## Model of Local Public Health System

The figure depicts how each Public Health Network engages community resources to assure the provision of the 10 Essential Services of Public Health.

The local public health system is described by a wheel with all the parts working in coordination to deliver the 10 Essential Services of Public Health (represented by the ten segmented areas between the spokes of the wheel.)

- Center circle (dark blue): At the center of the network is the governing or advisory body with responsibility for coordinating the local public health system. This advisory body is made up of representative members of the local public health system including local government.
- 1st ring (white): To deliver the 10 Essential Services of Public Health, the advisory body works through specific organization(s) to implement health and safety initiatives. Examples of likely lead organizations are listed for each essential service. Which organization assumes the lead role depends on the community and available resources.
- 2nd ring (light blue): Lead organizations receive additional support in implementing health and safety initiatives from other community partners for each essential service. Examples of supporting organizations are provided for each essential service.
- 3rd ring (orange): The practice of public health is defined by the 10 Essential Services of Public Health. Each of the 10 Essential Services is represented by a segment of the wheel.