



Knox County Health Department
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PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Health Department Poised for Possible Funding Cuts

Knox County, IL – Local Health Department officials today announced their full agreement with a statement released yesterday by the Illinois Association of Public Health Administrators asking Governor Quinn and the members of the Illinois General Assembly to preserve local health protection funds totaling \$17 million dollars, in the State's 2010 budget.

"At this point in time," reports Rhonda Peterson, Interim Public Health Administrator for the Knox County Health Department, "it appears that Local Health Protection Grant funds provided to local health departments to fund the provision of health protection services, have been eliminated in the proposed FY 2010 State of Illinois budget."

Local Health Protection Grant dollars are funds are used by the Health Department to pay, in part, for core programs that protect the public health; such as, communicable disease surveillance and control, and enforcement programs to ensure that food is safely handled at restaurants and retail outlets, and inspections of private sewage disposal systems and water wells. "Any reduction of these funds locally," remarked Wil Hayes, Director of Environmental Health for the Knox County Health Department, "would impede the effective delivery of vital public health protection services to the residents of Knox County."

Health Department staff are still hoping for the best, but information from the State Health Department projects possible budget cuts for other programs as well. These tentative program cuts range from 50 to 75 percent, depending on the program; and the list of local Health Department programs in jeopardy is lengthy, and includes: Teen Parent Services, Teen Pregnancy Prevention, Family Case Management, Tobacco Prevention, Health Works, and APORS.

"We," states Peterson, "as a Health Department, are well aware what impact proposed budget cuts will have on public health services locally; and, internally we are doing all we can to avoid cutting programming." "It's now time we ask the residents of Knox County to become aware of the public health dangers associated with cutting these critical programs, and take action to contact their local congressman to voice their concerns."

Health Department staff continue to monitor budget activities in Springfield. For more information about your local health department, including local health protection programs, contact the Health Department at 309.344.2224; www.knoxcountyhealth.org.

Contact your local Congressman in response to vital public health services in your community: Representative Don Moffitt, #5 Weinberg Arcade, Galesburg, Illinois 61401, 309.343.8000; and Senator Dale Risinger, #4 Weinberg Arcade, Galesburg, Illinois 61401, 309.343.8176.