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Senate Bill 2178 and House Bill 4311

Local Health Protection Grant Appropriation Bills

SB2178 and HB4311 appropriate \$17.1 million for the Local Health Protection Grant, which is distributed statewide to all 97 certified local health departments.

These funds pay for basic public health services that are essential for protecting public health and safety:

Disease Control: Investigation of disease outbreaks (Ebola, mumps, measles, Legionnaire's Disease, West Nile Virus and others) – 6,857 investigations in SFY'14.

Food Safety: Restaurant inspections to protect the public: 80,793 routine inspections of restaurants and other retail food outlets and 14,405 re-inspections of 55,034 retail establishments and 16,967 inspections of temporary food establishments in SFY'14. Critical violations of food safety regulations were found at 27,095 of these establishments.

Safe Drinking Water: Local health departments issued 2,514 permits for construction of water wells, responded to 9,538 requests for inspection or sampling of wells or well water, consulted on well construction or use 24,124 times, and conducted 5,470 inspections of 2,290 wells in SFY'14.

Safe Sewage Disposal: Local health departments issued 5,109 construction permits, conducted 9,227 inspections of 6,217 private systems, conducted 6,834 inspections in response to 1,619 complaints, and responded to 40,832 requests for consultation on private sewage system operation in SFY'14.

These are the services are a statutory responsibility of the Illinois Department of Public Health, which delegates authority and funds to certified local health departments.

Public Health Protects Everyone in Your District.

Protect the Public From Exposure to Infectious Disease.

Pass SB 2178 and HB 4311!



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The Local Health Protection Grant

Each year, the State of Illinois appropriates about \$17.1 million to the Illinois Department of Public Health for the Local Health Protection Grant. Funds are distributed to all 97 certified local health departments by formula. These funds pay for public health services that most of us take for granted: the investigation of disease outbreaks, inspection of restaurants, inspection of private water wells, and regulation of private sewage disposal systems.

Investigation of and Response to Disease Outbreaks – Local health departments use these and other state funds to lead their community’s response to disease outbreaks, like the recent outbreak of Legionnaire’s Disease in Quincy, (53 cases and 10 deaths),ⁱ the outbreak of mumps at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (over 100 cases),ⁱⁱ four cases of mumps in McLean County,ⁱⁱⁱ and a new outbreak of mumps at Eastern Illinois University^{iv} (two cases). Local health departments are also responsible for taking steps to investigate and control the spread of tuberculosis, sexually-transmitted infections, HIV, diseases that can be prevented through vaccination, and other infectious diseases. Outbreak investigations involve interviews with infected persons and people they have been in contact with in order to identify the source of the outbreak. Measures to control the spread of disease may include treatment of individuals, large-scale immunization clinics, or isolation of infected persons. In SFY’14, local health departments investigated 6,857 reports^v of communicable diseases not associated with contaminated food.

These funds also support the investigation of and response to outbreaks of food-borne illnesses that result from food that has been improperly prepared, stored, or handled. Local health departments investigated 1,003 reports of food-borne illnesses in SFY’14.

Restaurant Inspections -- Local health departments use these and other funds to routinely inspect restaurants and other retail food outlets to prevent the outbreak of food-borne diseases. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “Each year, 1 in 6 Americans gets sick by consuming contaminated foods or beverages. ... More than 250 different food-borne illnesses have been described.”^{vi} In SFY’14, local health departments conducted 80,793 routine inspections and 14,405 re-inspections of 55,034 retail establishments and 16,967 inspections of temporary food establishments. Critical violations of food safety regulations were found at 27,095 of these establishments.

Regulation of Drinking (“Potable”) Water – Local health departments share this responsibility with the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency. Local health departments focus their efforts on “closed loop” wells^{vii} and semi-private and private water supplies. Local health departments inspect and draw samples from non-community public water supplies^{viii} and owners are required to correct code violations. Local health departments also inspect the construction of water wells by licensed contractors. In SFY’14, local health departments issued 2,514 permits for construction of water wells, responded to 9,538 requests for inspection or sampling of wells or well water, consulted on well construction or use 24,124 times, and conducted 5,470 inspections of 2,290 wells. (“Potable” comes from the Latin, *potabilis*, meaning, “drinkable.”)

Regulation of Private Sewage Systems – Local health departments use these and other funds to inspect private sewage systems and sewage disposal contractors to prevent the transmission of disease that results from the improper handling, storage, transportation, and disposal of sewage from private systems. In SFY'14, local health departments issued 5,109 construction permits, conducted 9,227 inspections of 6,217 private systems, conducted 6,834 inspections in response to 1,619 complaints, and responded to 40,832 requests for consultation on private sewage system operation.

Funding of local health departments for these services. The Local Health Protection Grant provides about one-third of the cost of providing these services. The rest of the cost comes from local property tax revenues and from the collection of fees for permits.

The appropriation for the Local Health Protection grant has been level, and therefore losing ground against inflation, for eight of the last nine years. (The appropriation was *reduced* in SFY'12 but restored to its current level the next year.) In the meantime, local health department expenses, including the salaries of Licensed Environmental Health Professionals required to conduct these services, increase.

For many years, local health departments have relied on nursing and health education staff supported through Maternal and Child Health grant programs such as Family Case Management and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children to have a sufficient number of health professionals available for community vaccination campaigns (like influenza and school immunization clinics each Fall) and disease outbreak investigations. Through budgetary problems, increasingly complex program requirements and reductions in funding for these programs, many local health departments have lost this capacity.

The allocation and use of these funds is governed by the Local Health Protection Grant Code, found at 77 Illinois Administrative Code 615.

END NOTES

ⁱ Associated Press. (9 September 2015). Legionnaires' disease death toll rises to 10 in Quincy.

<http://fox2now.com/2015/09/09/legionnaires-disease-death-toll-rises-to-10-in-quincy/>. Accessed 16 September 2015.

ⁱⁱ The News-Gazette. (16 September 2015). Updated: Number of mumps cases tops 100 in local outbreak; more clinics set.

<http://www.news-gazette.com/news/local/2015-08-26/updated-number-mumps-cases-tops-100-local-outbreak-more-clinics-set.html>. Accessed 16 September 2015.

ⁱⁱⁱ Pantagraph.com. (5 September 2015). Mumps outbreak declared in McLean County.

http://www.pantagraph.com/news/local/mumps-outbreak-declared-in-mclean-county/article_a58116a0-3406-5e67-820c-399fcb78f603.html. Accessed 16 September 2015.

^{iv} WGN-TV. (15 September 2015). Two students at Eastern Illinois University diagnosed with mumps.

<http://wgntv.com/2015/09/15/two-students-at-eastern-illinois-university-diagnosed-with-mumps/>. Accessed 16 September 2015.

^v Statistics for State Fiscal Years 2014 summarize data reported by local health departments and were provided by the Illinois Department of Public Health.

^{vi} U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Foodborne Illness, Foodborne Disease, (sometimes called "Food Poisoning"): General questions. <http://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/facts.html#top>. Updated 23 September 2014. Accessed 16 September 2015.

^{vii} "Closed Loop Well" means a sealed, watertight loop of pipe buried outside of a building foundation intended to re-circulate a liquid solution through a heat exchanger but is limited to the construction of the borehole and the grouting of the borehole and does not include the piping and appurtenances used in any other capacity. "Closed loop well" does not include any horizontal closed loop well systems where grouting is not necessary by law or standard industry practice." – Illinois Water Well Construction Code, 415 ILCS 30.

^{viii} "Non-Community Water System" means a public water system which is not a community water system, and has at least 15 service connections used by nonresidents, or regularly serves 25 or more nonresident individuals daily for at least 60 days per year." -- Section 9(a)(4) of the Illinois Groundwater Protection Act, 415 ILCS 55