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New report finds low public health investment in San Joaquin Valley

Despite having some of the state's highest levels of poverty and poor health outcomes, the San Joaquin Valley receives less public health funding from state and federal sources than other

California counties with similar populations according to a new report from the San Joaquin Valley Public Health Consortium.

The report is the first to compare the operational capacity of local health departments in eight Valley counties to their peers in California.

"In the San Joaquin Valley, we make the most efficient use of the funds we receive to provide an impressive range of public health services," said William Mitchell, San Joaquin County Public Health Services director. "However, due to higher levels of poverty, poorer health outcomes and the inequitable distribution of funding compared to other California counties of similar population, these resources do not begin to meet the health needs of our communities."

The report claims that while the region's local health departments provide a broader range of services than many of their peers statewide, department leaders have concerns over the adequacy of services, particularly educating residents about chronic disease prevention.

According to the report, California statutes enable but do not require local health departments to address prevention of chronic conditions. "We found that California statutes and regulations fail to establish an expectation that local health departments prioritize population health concerns," said Dr. Marlene Bengiamin, research director for the Central Valley Health Policy Institute at Fresno State.

Report author and Central Valley Health Policy Institute director Dr. John Capitman said, "Robust public investments in improving population health are crucial to the success of the Affordable Care Act in California. Our region's future economic well-being and quality of life rest on promoting population health and reducing the costs of chronic disease such as heart disease, diabetes and asthma."

As California implements both the Affordable Care Act and budget reduction initiatives, there have been calls to review state and county roles in financing and delivering health care services.

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"This report indicates the need for a broader discussion about local health department roles and better alignment between new expectations to prevent and manage non-communicable diseases, public health statutes and regulations," Capitman said.

For more information, contact Dr. John Capitman at 559.228.2150 or 617.838.1513.

Related link:

- ["Operational and Statutory Capacity of Local Health Departments in the San Joaquin Valley" policy brief](#)

By [Kathleen Schock](#) | October 28th, 2013 | Categories: [PRESS RELEASES](#) | Tags: [health policy](#) | Comments Off

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