

Montana's Local Boards of Health: Three Examples

While Montana's statutes prescribe the duties and authority of all local health departments, the implementation of those statutes takes on markedly different characteristics across the state. As one local health officer stated, "When you've seen one local health department in Montana, you've seen one local health department."

The vastly different needs, constraints, resources and demands for service between and among each of Montana's counties require that local boards of health create locally appropriate ways to provide the core functions of the public health system - assessment, policy development and assurance.

Following are descriptions of three distinctly different types of local boards of health. They represent the most populous county, a mid-sized county, and a smaller county. These examples are meant to highlight the diversity in Montana's local public health delivery system. Each provides examples of innovative approaches to protecting and promoting health that were developed to meet unique local needs. These examples may be of interest to other jurisdictions.