

# Local Public Health in Colorado:

## Partnering to Improve the Health of All Coloradans



Cara Bradbury  
Executive Director  
CALPHO



Tom Gonzales  
Director  
Larimer County Public Health



Pamela Gould  
Curriculum Development & Training  
CDPHE OPHP

# What this session will cover:

- Colorado Public Health System
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Current Trends in Public Health
- Colorado Association of Local Public Health Officials
- Office of Public Health Practice, Planning, & Local Partnerships



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

# What is public health?



- Public health...
  - Is a system that promotes the health of a community, while reducing disease, injury, disability, and death
  - Involves *all* of us
  - Often acts as a “convener” or “chief health strategist” to address issues affecting a community’s health
  - Is NOT medical care

# Public Health vs Medical Care

<b>Medical Practice</b> Treats an individual's sickness We need medical care <b>some</b> of the time	<b>Public Health</b> Ensures a community's wellness We need public health <b>all the</b> time
Individual Patient	Community
Exam	Surveillance
Diagnosis	Community Assessment
Treatment Plan	Program Planning
Treatment	Program Implementation
Fee/Payment	Budget/Financing
Recall/Patient Evaluation	Program Evaluation

# Scope of Governmental Local Public Health – The WHAT

## Colorado Foundational Public Health Services

Maternal, Child,  
Adolescent  
& Family  
Health



Environmental  
Health



Communicable  
Disease Prevention,  
Investigation &  
Control



Access to &  
Linkage  
with Care



Chronic Disease,  
Injury Prevention &  
Behavioral Health  
Promotion



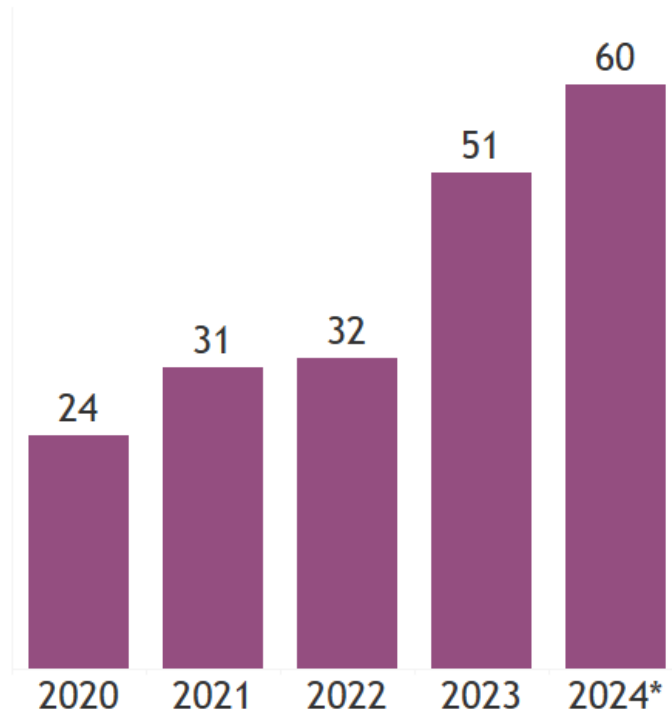
# Scope of Governmental Local Public Health – The HOW





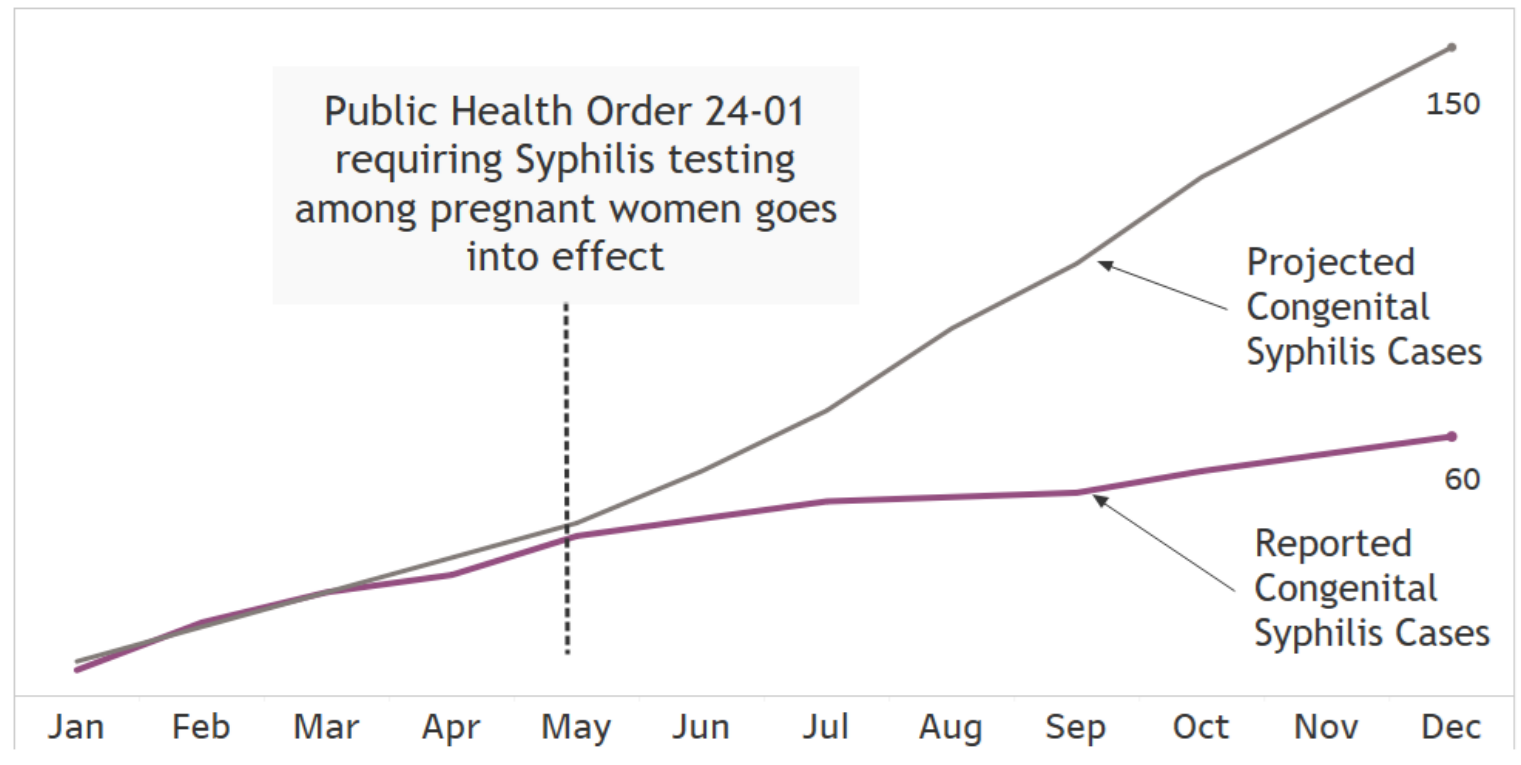
# Public Health Impacts

Five year Congenital Syphilis Trends in Colorado. This chart shows the number of Congenital Cases in Colorado between 2020-2024\*



\*2024 Data is Provisional

Projected and Reported cases of Congenital Syphilis closely aligned prior to the passing of Public Health Order 24-01, which required syphilis testing of all pregnant women. This chart shows Cumulative Congenital cases by Month in 2024\*, projected vs reported.



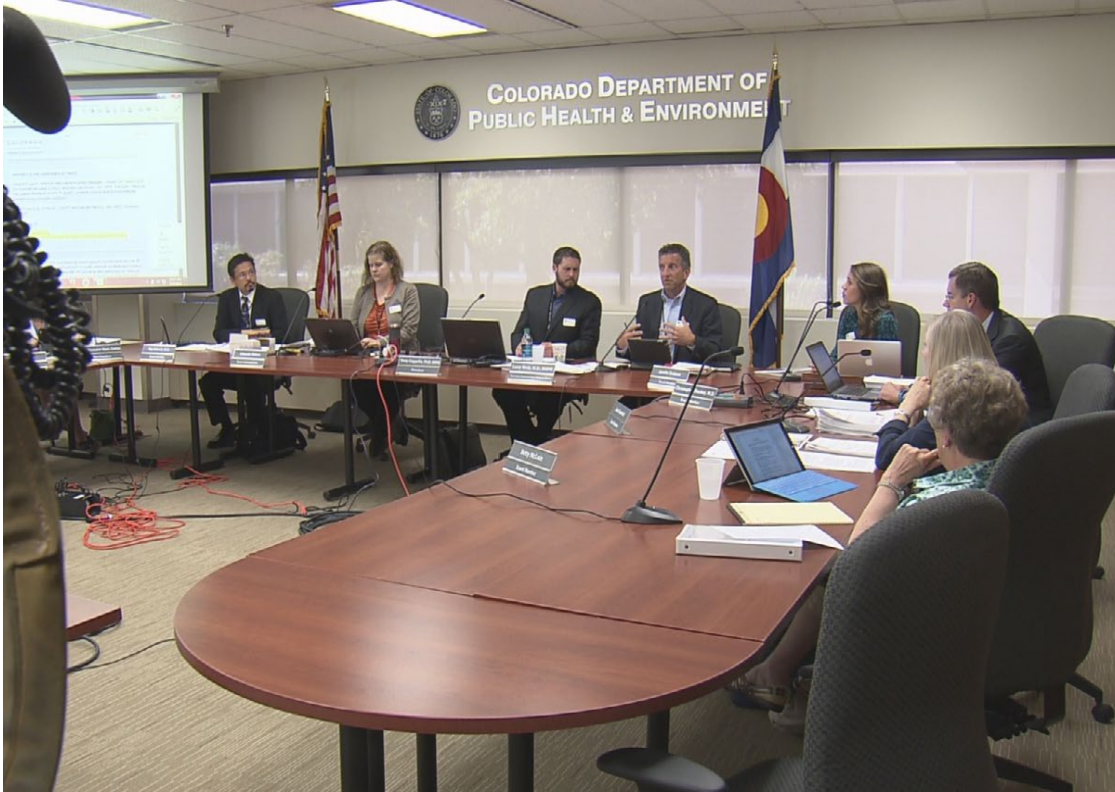
# Roles and Responsibilities

## The Colorado Public Health Act of 2008, C.R.S. 25-1-501

- The Colorado Public Health Act of 2008 (C.R.S. 25-1-501) was enacted to ensure that all residents of Colorado have access to high-quality public health services, ultimately reducing healthcare costs by preventing injuries and diseases. The Act outlines a shared responsibility between state and local health agencies and introduced the following key provisions:
  - Implementation of 5-year cycles for state and local public health assessments and improvement plans
  - Clear definition of the roles, duties, and powers of local health agencies and boards of health



# State Board of Health



- 9 members
- Appointments made by the Governor
- 4-year term
- 1 member must be a county commissioner
- No more than 5 members can be of the same political party

# State Statute

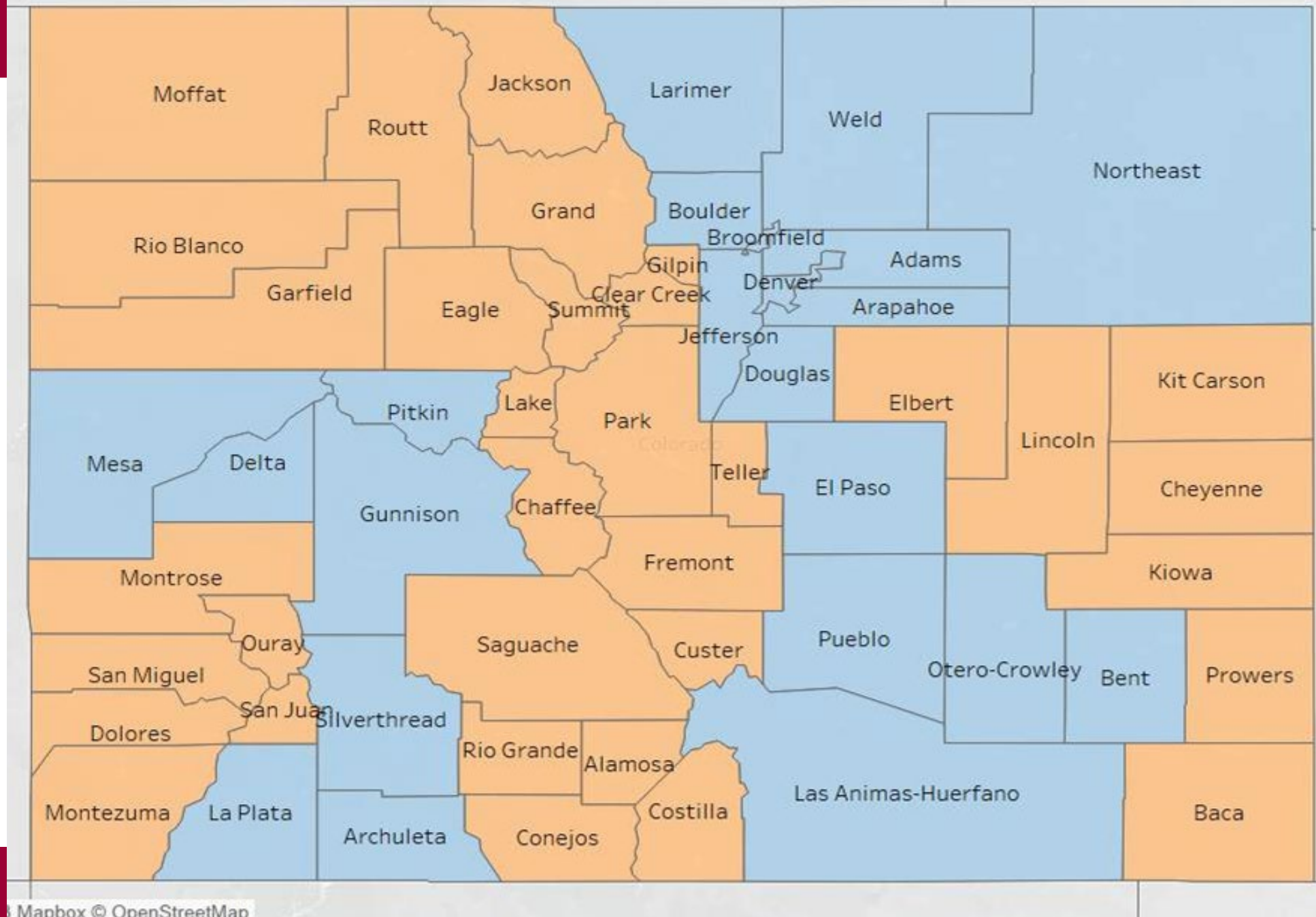
Colorado Revised State Statute § 25-1-506 requires that each county, by **resolution of its board of county commissioners**, shall establish & maintain a county public health agency. An agency shall consist of a **county or district board of health**, a public health director & all other personnel employed or retained.

# Boards of Health Structures Map

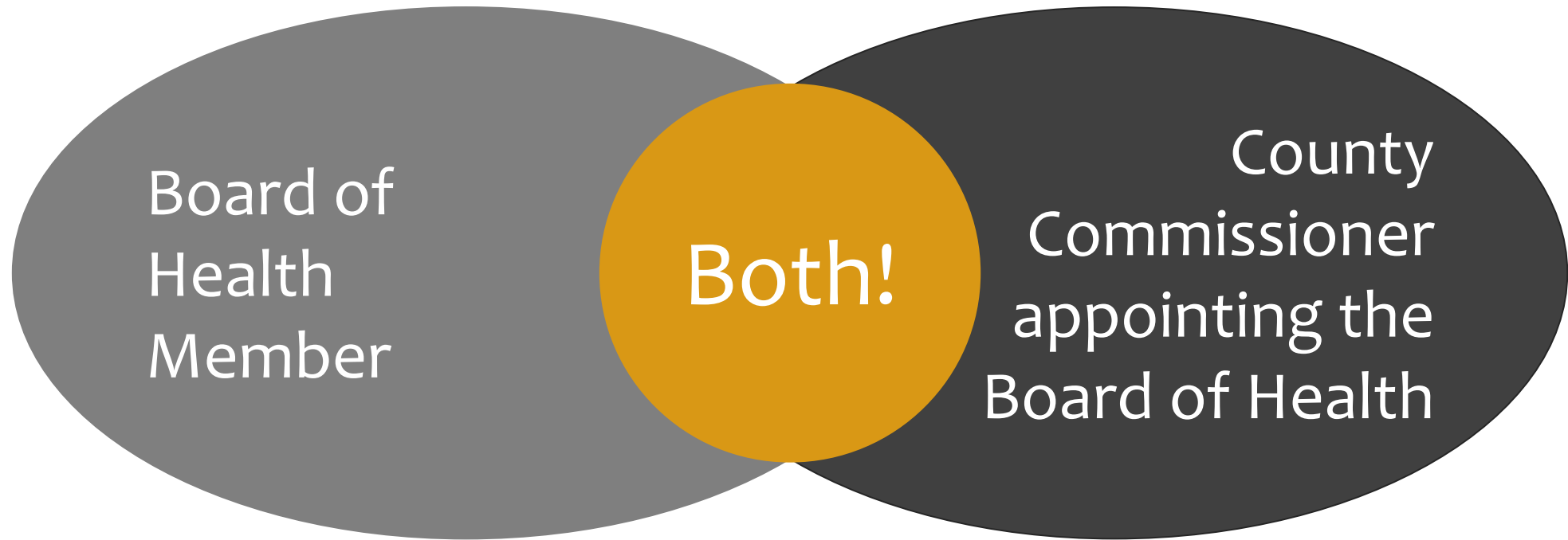
Board of Health Structure

County Commissioners only

Appointed Board of Health



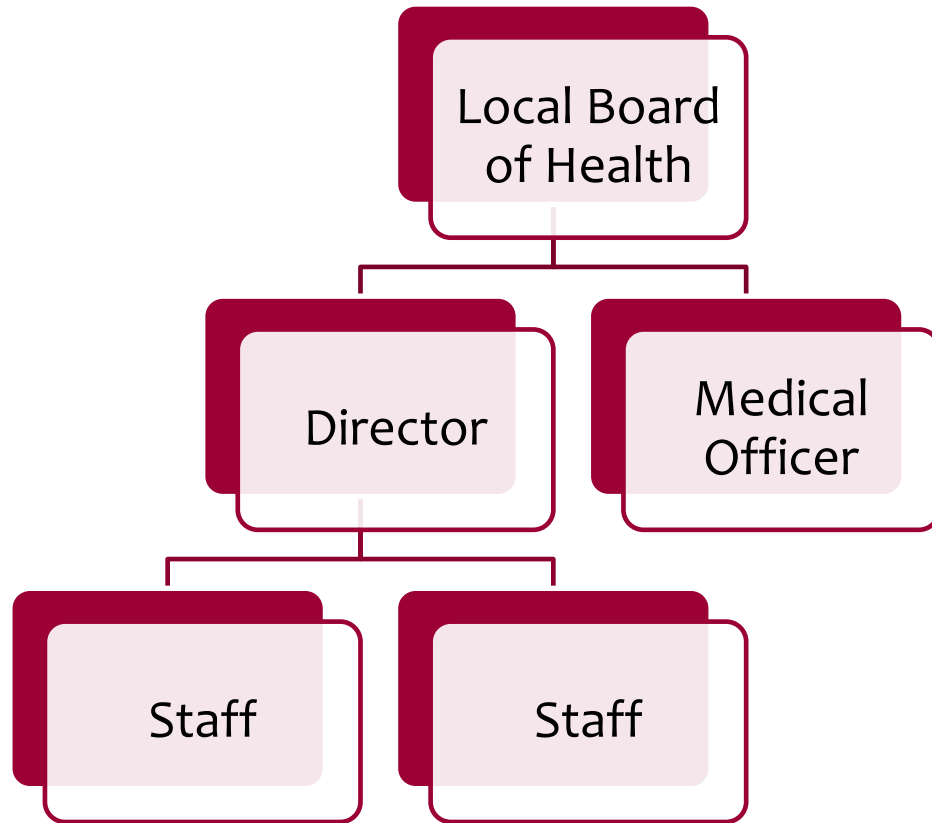
# Who is in the room?



# Local Board of Health (LBOH) Powers & Duties

- Appoint a Public Health Director.
- Employ or contract with a medical officer to provide guidance if the director is not a physician.
- Conduct regular board meetings, hold hearings, and gather testimony.
- Ensure the availability, maintenance, and proper equipping of offices and facilities for administering Core Public Health Services.
- Establish general policies for the public health agency to follow.
- Approve a 5-year Community Health Improvement Plan and submit it to the State Board of Health for review.
- Issue orders and adopt rules in alignment with state laws, regulations, and directives for public or environmental health matters that do not pose an immediate health threat (e.g., nuisance abatement).
- Set and assess appropriate fees.

# Local Public Health Structure



- Agency consists of:
  - Local board of health (LBOH)
  - Director (appointed by LBOH)
  - Medical officer (if director is not a physician)
  - Relevant personnel to carry out duties such as Environmental Health Specialist, Public Health Nurse, Health Educator, Epidemiologist, Health Planner



## Public Health Director Powers & Duties

- Conduct a comprehensive community health assessment and develop a local or regional public health plan to address identified needs.
- Annually estimate the total cost of maintaining the agency for the upcoming year and submit the budget for review and approval.
- Allocate and direct resources effectively to implement the county or district public health plan, guided by service priorities established by the local board of health.
- Issue orders and adopt rules in accordance with state laws, regulations, and directives to address public health emergencies, such as quarantine and isolation, water boil advisories, evacuations, or the closure of public spaces.

# Emerging Public Health Challenges

- **Climate Change and Health**
  - Increased frequency of extreme weather events (e.g., heatwaves, floods) leading to health risks.
- **Behavioral Health Crisis**
  - Rising rates of mental health disorders, especially among youth.
- **Chronic Disease Epidemic**
  - Continued prevalence of diabetes, heart disease, and obesity.



# Innovations in Public Health Practice

- **Data Modernization**
  - Enhancing real-time data sharing to improve public health responses.
- **Community-Centered Approaches**
  - Co-designing programs with community input to ensure culturally appropriate services.
- **Public Health Workforce Development**
  - Expanding skill sets in data science, communications, and cross-sector collaboration.

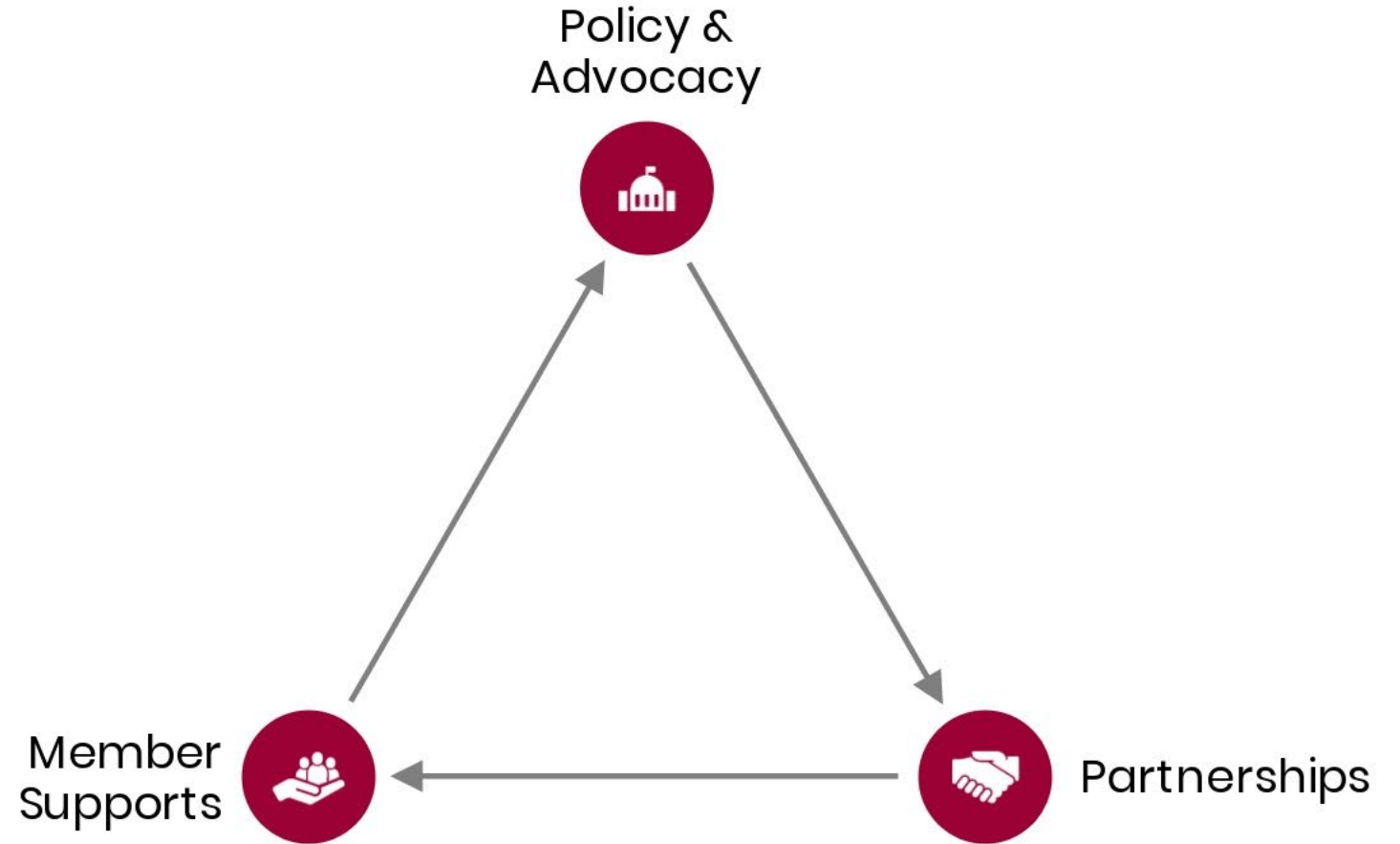


# Opportunities for Collaboration and Advocacy



- **Health and Housing Initiatives**
  - Partnerships to address homelessness and improve housing conditions.
- **Strengthening Partnerships**
  - Collaborating with schools, businesses, and non-profits to promote public health goals.
- **Advancing Health Equity**
  - Reducing disparities in healthcare access and outcomes.

# CALPHO Organizational Pillars





# Advancing the Public Health System

- Examples
  - Public Health Workforce Gap and Needs Assessment
  - Public Health Data Modernization Initiative
  - Public Health Practice Transformation





# The Office of Public Health Practice, Planning & Local Partnerships



**COLORADO**

**Office of Public Health Practice,  
Planning, & Local Partnerships**

Department of Public Health & Environment



**COLORADO**

**Office of Public Health Practice,  
Planning, & Local Partnerships**

Department of Public Health & Environment

**Funding**

**Training**

**Planning**

**Resources**

# Board of Health Training State Statute

Colorado Revised State Statute  
§ 25-1-508 includes a  
requirement that all local  
board of health members  
**complete annual training**  
courses from the Colorado  
Department of Public Health  
and Environment (CDPHE).



**COLORADO**

Office of Public Health Practice,  
Planning, & Local Partnerships

Department of Public Health & Environment

# Our Goals for Board of Health Trainings

Relevant, usable information  
that will assist Board of Health  
members in supporting their  
health department in  
**improving the health of your  
community.**



**COLORADO**

**Office of Public Health Practice,  
Planning, & Local Partnerships**

Department of Public Health & Environment

As a county commissioner, you influence public health by having well trained board of health members.



# Boards of Health have 6 Vital Functions



*Adapted from NALBOH'S Six Functions of Public Health Governance*



# Together or Individually

**Anytime,  
online  
training  
modules**

**CO TRAIN**

**Facilitated,  
live training**



**As an entire  
board**

**or**

**Individually**

# County Commissioners can encourage individual training completion

Make agreeing to complete training a requirement for appointment.



Acknowledge members who complete training.



Ask for a training completion update at the end of each year.

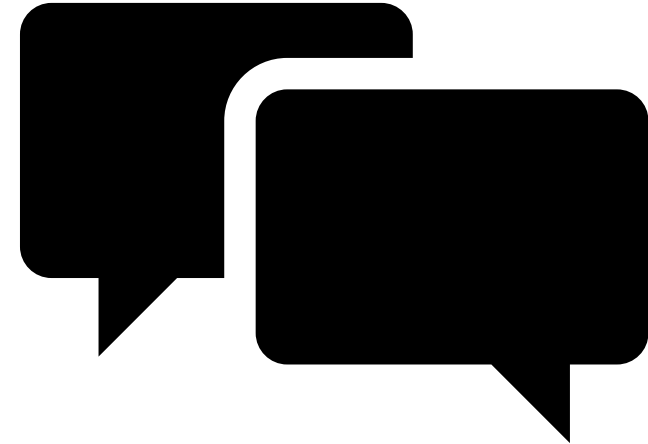


Reappoint members who complete training.



# Sources of Information and Support for LBOH

- Public Health Agency Director
- Public Health Agency Staff
- Other public health agency directors
- Statewide public health director organization (CALPHO)
- CDPHE and other state departments
- National organizations (NaCO, NACCHO, NALBOH)
- Federal government agencies
- Non-profit partners
- Colleges and Universities



# Thank you for serving your community!

## - What you can do -



Connect with your public health director regarding your Community Health Assessment



Align your public health funding with the needs of your community



Consider how other decisions are connected to the health of your community



Call us anytime. We are here to help!

[www.calpho.org](http://www.calpho.org)

# We are here to support you!

- Colorado Association of Local Public Health Officials (CALPHO)
  - Cara Bradbury, Executive Director
  - [Director@calpho.org](mailto:Director@calpho.org)
- Office of Public Health Practice, Planning & Local Partnerships
  - [OPHP@state.co.us](mailto:OPHP@state.co.us)



**COLORADO**

Office of Public Health Practice,  
Planning, & Local Partnerships

Department of Public Health & Environment

**CALPHO**

Colorado Association of Local Public Health Officials