



State and local coordination of epidemiologist work

To: Social Services Appropriations Committee
From: Janae Duncan, Director, Division of Population Health,
Melissa Dimond, Deputy Director, Division of Population Health
Subject: Utah State Legislature directive for the 2026 General Session

Purpose

This report responds to the following intent language from the Utah State Legislature:

"The Legislature intends that the Department of Health and Human Services report to the Social Services Appropriations Subcommittee by June 1, 2026 on how the State is coordinating the work done by epidemiologists at the agency with those working for local health departments to avoid duplication and maximize efficiencies."

Report

- Epidemiologic work across Utah's public health system is directed in partnership with leadership from the Utah Department of Health and Human Services and local health departments.
- A core group of leaders in epidemiology at the state and local level has worked to establish responsibilities and roles for epidemiologists at the state and local levels, and is working to implement these roles and responsibilities as we review funding, policy, and rules.
- Generally, work that supports individuals in a community, for example investigation and support of a case of infectious disease, occurs at the local level. Work that requires standardized processes or is efficient based on economies of scale, for example maintaining data infrastructure and statewide data dashboards to visualize information, occurs at the state level.
- There are promising opportunities for further groundbreaking efficiencies through modernization of practices using data and informatics, but this requires stable support for



public health data infrastructure that is currently reliant on federal funding. Without stable funding, fluctuations in federal funding compromises the quality and sustainability of implemented processes and efficiencies.