Healthy Communities
at the Public Health Institute

When it comes to health, place matters

Many local environments—especially in low-income communities—provide limited access to healthy foods and few opportunities for physical activity. Neighborhoods may be marred by pollution or by street violence. These community environments, often shaped by long-standing social inequities, must be transformed to support healthy lives.

PHI focuses on community-based solutions and works with partners to advance policy and environmental change strategies that can improve health outcomes.

Since 1964, the Public Health Institute’s partners, programs and researchers have focused on what they do best: their work. They rely on PHI’s comprehensive operational infrastructure to quickly move their public health programs from concept to implementation to impact.

PHI’s approach includes:

**Advocating for policies**, at the local to international levels, that increase access to healthy foods, promote physical activity, protect the environment and more.

**Forging multisectoral partnerships** with health care, business, education and government to broaden community-based health improvement efforts.

**Building the capacity** of local leaders, health departments and organizations to become effective change agents in the movement to build healthier communities.

**Researching** the public’s exposure to environmental toxins and connections to diseases like cancer.

**Reducing health inequities** by focusing on the needs of underserved communities most vulnerable to poor health outcomes.

The Public Health Institute (PHI) is an independent, nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting health, well-being and quality of life throughout California, across the nation and around the world.
The impact of PHI’s work in healthy communities

Supporting healthy lifestyles through community change PHI’s Central California Regional Obesity Prevention Program, California Convergence Coordinating Office and California Community Transformation Initiative (CA4Health) advance environmental and policy changes that are making it easier for people to eat healthy and stay active in under-resourced communities throughout California. Residents are benefiting from new farmers’ markets and community gardens, revamped parks, more walkable neighborhoods, local policies that promote wellness and more.

Cleaner air, better health PHI’s Regional Asthma Management and Prevention program helped pass California diesel emissions regulations that are projected to prevent 150,000 cases of asthma, 12,000 cases of acute bronchitis and 9,400 premature deaths over 15 years.

Protecting vulnerable communities from climate change PHI’s California Environmental Health Tracking Program conducted the Health Impact Assessment (HIA) for California’s cap-and-trade program, a critical element of the state’s Global Warming Solutions Act. The HIA’s recommendation to dedicate 10% of program revenue to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and mitigate the health impacts of climate change in California’s most disadvantaged communities was enacted into law.

Creating healthier cities PHI’s Center for Civic Partnerships runs the California Healthy Cities Project (CHCP), the largest and longest running statewide program of its kind in the U.S. CHCP has provided leadership development and technical assistance that have helped hundreds of local leaders and city governments improve their communities in the areas of safety, healthy aging, nutrition and physical activity, and more. CHCP received the National Coalition Award from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Linking chemical exposure and disease Research by PHI’s Child Health and Development Studies demonstrated that women who had been exposed to DDT as kids and showed high levels of the chemical during pregnancy were five times more likely to develop breast cancer later in life—an important finding as DDT, now banned in the U.S., is still used in many countries.

Other PHI programs working in healthy communities ACCESS Health Worldwide • Bay Area Regional Health Inequities Initiative • Berkeley Media Studies Group • California Adolescent Health Collaborative • California Food and Justice Coalition • California Project LEAN • Center for Collaborative Planning • Center for Health Leadership & Practice • Cleaner Cookstoves: Building Global Capacity & Improving Public Health • Health in All Policies • Network for a Healthy California • Public Health Trust

For more information about PHI’s work in healthy communities, visit www.phi.org or contact PHI communications at communications@phi.org.