



## State Report

**State:** Delaware

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### **Projects/Issues Addressed This Year:**

Information on the Delaware Division of Public Health (DPH), its programs, services and accomplishments can be found at <http://www.dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dph/index.html>.

Public Health Nursing (PHN) established and/or maintained collaborative relationships and memorandums of understanding with nine area colleges and universities. DPH nurses provided clinical and other learning opportunities for nursing students, promoting consideration of public health nursing careers.

To maintain and enhance skills, DPH nursing staff received continuing education through internal and external collaboration. Statewide in-service programs included: DHSS Nurse Preparedness Training (including skills and simulation laboratory experience), Influenza Update, and Pharmacy Updates on "Diabetes" and "Contraception".

Public Health Nursing/Quality Improvement Team worked with DPH Community Health Services to develop performance standards, and to conduct quality assurance audits. In collaboration with Family Planning, Public Health Nursing developed a reproductive and sexual health quality improvement advanced practice nurse (APN) position and hired an APN to work with DPH clinics and 18 contracted community-based agencies.

A retrospective evaluation of DPH's Smart Start (prenatal/postpartum home visiting) program demonstrated success in enrollment, and in low birth weight and prematurity outcomes relative to comparison group.

### **Projects/Issues Pending:**

Public Health Nursing conducted a nursing retention survey of nurses in nursing and non-nursing positions within DPH Community Health. (1/4 nursing positions are vacant, with a hiring freeze on state-funded positions. Twenty-seven percent of nurses are eligible for retirement, with nearly 40% anticipating retiring/leaving DPH within 5 years.) Analysis of results will be used to develop strategies to retain our nursing workforce.

### **Issues & Special Concerns for Public Health Nursing:**

State Budget Shortfall: Proposed Cuts in Services and Salaries

Staff Retention: Hiring Freeze and Aging Workforce