

AGENCY NAME:	Department of Public Health		
AGENCY CODE:	J060	SECTION:	031

AGENCY'S DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

Background

The Department of Public Health (DPH) was established effective July 1, 2024, pursuant to Act 60 of 2023 (DHEC Restructuring). This Act created two new cabinet agencies from the Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC).

DPH is responsible for providing services through the following core divisions:

- Health Promotion and Services (HPS): Promotes community health and well-being by protecting people from disease, illness and injury, as well as providing access to quality care. HPS also plays a key leadership role in compiling, analyzing, and making widely available health-related data, including managing the state's vital records program (birth, death, and marriage certificates).
- Healthcare Quality (HQ): Enhances patient safety and the quality of care by leading efforts to make healthcare in South Carolina safer, more accessible, affordable, equitable, and of higher quality.

In addition, Administration provides the Department's program areas with the necessary support to ensure the successful accomplishment of our mission and vision. These teams include health strategy and external affairs, general counsel, information technology, human resources, and finance and operations.

DPH has locations in central office (Columbia-area) and approximately 100 locations across the state, with nearly 2,900 employees providing critical services to the people of South Carolina.

Agency Successes

A significant and notable success for DPH during the previous year was the successful move of its Central Office operations headquarters from 2100 Bull St. location in downtown Columbia to the State of South Carolina Health Campus at 400 Otarre Parkway in Cayce.

This move involved the relocation of more than 1,100 employees to a new facility that will allow opportunities for cross-collaboration with other state health agencies in a facility offering amenities that will aid recruitment and retention as well as allow DPH to better serve the people of South Carolina.

Other highlights from the previous year include:

- South Carolina rising to number 37 in national health rankings, the state's highest ranking in 35 years;

AGENCY NAME:	Department of Public Health		
AGENCY CODE:	J060	SECTION:	031

- The release of the latest [Drug Overdose Deaths Report](#), which showed the first decline in overdose deaths in the state in more than a decade;
- Co-releasing the state’s first-ever [Childhood Cancer Report](#), a groundbreaking compilation of 25 years of data;
- Successful emergency response efforts both during and after Hurricane Helene;
- The debut of three new Mobile Health Units, or ‘health departments on wheels,’ to take our services to all corners of South Carolina and make it easier for South Carolinians to access our services when and where they are needed;
- The “topping-out” ceremony celebrating the completion of the structural framework of the future home of the state-of-the-art Public Health Lab; and
- The creation of the interactive [Respiratory Disease Dashboard](#), giving South Carolinians current disease data related to COVID, RSV and influenza.

Additionally, our Public Health Lab performed more than 240,000 screenings of newborns for genetic diseases that can be devastating but can often be treated successfully with early detection. Thus far we have detected such illnesses in over 1,000 newborns, helping save them from severe disability or death.

We also performed nearly 4,000 in-home visits over the previous year to at-risk new moms and their infants to help reduce maternal and infant mortality as well as successfully executed safe sleep and “never leave a child in a hot car” campaigns that reached thousands of new moms and other caregivers.

Significant Projects

State Health Assessment (SHA) and State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP)

In 2024, DPH led the development of the [State Health Assessment \(SHA\)](#) with key support from the Alliance for a Healthier South Carolina and its membership.

The SHA was a comprehensive compilation of health-related data outlining health across the lifespan, from maternal and infant health to healthy aging, highlighting our state’s population as a whole as well as the demographic subpopulations making South Carolina the diverse state it is.

The assessment examined key health indicators, trends, and progress in the field of public health and built on extensive community engagement. This year, that information was included in and fundamentally informs the latest iteration of South Carolina’s State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP), which officially will be released this November.

AGENCY NAME:	Department of Public Health		
AGENCY CODE:	J060	SECTION:	031

The SHIP provides a vision for continuous health improvement and will be a roadmap used by government agencies, community-based organizations, health care professionals, advocates, policy makers, and other stakeholders to take action to leverage resources and focus work on measurable improvement.

While DPH is tasked with leading this effort, the SHA and the SHIP are developed with extensive input and collaboration from various organizations, associations, agencies, and communities throughout the state to ensure diverse expertise, experience, and perspectives are included.

Additionally, DPH will use these assessments in its strategic planning. DPH is currently updating the agency's strategic planning process to include promoting a culture of continuous improvement and building in consistent mechanisms for listening, planning, doing, monitoring, evaluating, and adjusting to make sure the strategic planning efforts continuously align with statewide needs.

To do so, DPH is using the SHA and the SHIP as roadmaps to ensure the direction set for the agency aligns with the identified needs and strategic priority areas.

Internal and External Performance Factors

As previously mentioned, the largest single internal and external performance factor impacting DPH's performance over the previous year has been negotiating the many challenges, obstacles, and opportunities presented by the move of the agency's headquarters and more than 1,100 employees to its new location at 400 Otarre Parkway in Cayce.

This was accomplished thanks to the tireless work of many teams of employees responsible for various facets of the move, from IT to finance to procurement to management teams working out spatial layouts to optimize productivity.

On June 24, 2025, Gov. Henry McMaster joined members of the General Assembly and other state agency leaders to celebrate the restructuring of South Carolina's health services and successful relocation of those agencies to the new State of S.C. Health Campus.

Risk assessment and Mitigation Strategies

If DPH were unable to accomplish its goals and objectives, the most likely negative impacts to the public may be:

- A widespread disease outbreak without the necessary resources for response;
- A significant decline in quality of health care services provided in our state that could result in injury, illness, or death; or
- An increase in chronic diseases with an accompanying decrease in overall wellness and health.

AGENCY NAME:	Department of Public Health		
AGENCY CODE:	J060	SECTION:	031

To mitigate these potential outcomes, DPH continues sustaining critical relationships with other state agencies; local governments; local and state medical and health organizations; community-based organizations; and federal government entities.

In working with the General Assembly to avoid these crises, DPH would work to ensure state laws provide sufficient authority to maintain and improve services and care within DPH's scope; regularly review and propose amendments to agency regulations to implement best practices and technological advances; strengthen the regulated community's operations and functions; and intentionally align budget requests with the stated objectives and measures in the agency's Strategic Plan.