



NORTH CAROLINIANS KNOW, VALUE AND TRUST PUBLIC HEALTH

When North Carolinians know public health, they trust public health. From hurricane response to food safety, monitoring environmental hazards and everyday disease prevention, public health agencies are essential, effective and valued partners in building a healthier, safer North Carolina.

Public Health Matters More Than Ever

In 2025, North Carolinians overwhelmingly recognize the critical role of public health in their lives:

- 81% say the work of the NC Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) is extremely or very important to improving health statewide — up from 77% in 2024.
- 66% rate the NC public health system as good or excellent at protecting residents from health threats and preventing illness — up from 59% in 2024.



Familiarity Builds Trust

The more North Carolinians know about public health, the more they trust it. In 2025:

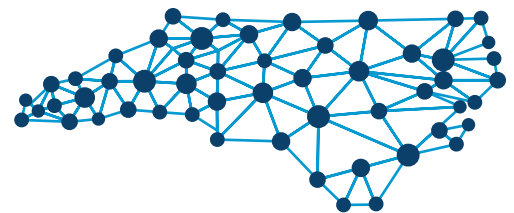
- 87% of those familiar with NCDHHS trust it to provide accurate health recommendations.
- Residents familiar with NCDHHS are significantly more likely to trust its guidance and rate its performance as excellent.



Perception of Public Health's Role is Expanding

North Carolinians increasingly view public health as responsible not only for disease prevention, but also for:

- Ensuring access to health care for all
- Responding to natural disasters
- Providing reliable health information
- Protecting people from environmental hazards



Trust in Local and State Public Health is Strong and Growing

Compared to 2024, trust has increased:

- 73% trust local health departments quite a lot or a great deal
- 67% of North Carolinians have a great deal or quite a lot of trust in NCDHHS
- Ratings for caring, effectiveness and credibility of public health institutions have improved

Public Health in Action: Hurricane Helene

Hurricane Helene proved the value of local and state public health response:

- 73% of residents in affected areas recalled timely health communications
- 70% rated their local health department's response as excellent or good
- 63% of North Carolinians rated NCDHHS's response to Hurricane Helene as good or excellent, a figure that outpaces FEMA and other agencies



Source: Perceptions of Public Health in North Carolina: Wave II Findings. February 2025.