



News from the Office of  
ERIE COUNTY EXECUTIVE MARK POLONCARZ

## NEWS RELEASE

**Health Commissioner  
Dr. Gale Burstein**

**April 1<sup>st</sup> -7<sup>th</sup> is Public Health Awareness Week**

***Educating Communities About Public Health Benefits***

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ERIE COUNTY, NY— The Erie County Department of Health (“ECDOH”) is joining other public health agencies in recognizing National Public Health Week from April 1 – 8, 2013. Each year, National Public Health Week helps to educate communities about the important preventive role that public health departments play in keeping residents healthier and more informed about public health issues while promoting a health care system that values prevention as much as treatment. Every year in the United States, seven out of 10 deaths are due to preventable chronic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease. In fact, chronic diseases account for a whopping 75 percent of national health care.

“Our nation and community simply cannot sustain the current trajectory of health care spending and chronic disease rates”, said **Dr. Gale Burstein, Commissioner of Health**. “Fortunately, we know that investing in prevention and public health can make an enormous difference. National Public Health Week helps educate and engage Americans in the movement to create a healthier America for ourselves and the generations to come.”

Research shows that each 10 percent increase in local public health spending contributes to a nearly 7 percent decrease in infant deaths, a 3.2 percent decrease in cardiovascular deaths and a 1.4 percent decrease in diabetes-related deaths. The U.S. spends more on health care than any other country, with such costs rising ten-fold from 1980 to 2010 and expected to rise faster than national income during the foreseeable future. However, investing just \$10 per person each year in proven, community-based public health efforts could save the nation more than \$16 billion

within five years. That's a \$5.60 return for every \$1 invested. Public health and prevention are critical pieces in creating a healthier nation. "We all have a role to play in making America the healthiest nation in one generation said **Dr. Burstein**. "And it starts with each of us taking the simple preventive steps that lead to better health"

Here are some quick facts about the value of public Health Initiatives:

- Routine childhood immunizations save \$9.9 million in direct health care costs, save 33,000 lives and prevent 14 million cases of disease.
- Each 10 percent increase in local public health spending contributes to a 6.9 percent decrease in infant deaths, a 3.2 percent decrease in cardiovascular deaths, a 1.4 percent decrease in deaths due to diabetes, and a 1.1 percent decrease in cancer deaths.
- From 1991 to 2006, investments in HIV prevention averted more than 350,000 infections<sup>13</sup> and saved more than \$125 billion in medical costs.
- Expanding the diagnosis and treatment of depression has an ROI of \$7 for every \$1 invested.<sup>16</sup> Also; substance abuse treatment has an ROI of \$4–\$7 for every \$1 invested.
- Citing the protective health benefits of breastfeeding, research finds that a minimum of \$3.6 billion could be saved if more women began and continued to breastfeed their newborns through 6 months of age.

To learn more about public health efforts in Erie County, visit [www.erie.gov/health](http://www.erie.gov/health)

For more information about National Public Health Week, visit [www.nphw.org](http://www.nphw.org)