



## Columbus Public Health

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Health Commissioner,  
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**Columbus Board of Health (left to right)**  
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Jefferson Morrison, JD, MS; Augustus G.  
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# CELEBRATING A RICH HISTORY OF PUBLIC HEALTH IN COLUMBUS

EST. 1833



240 Parsons Avenue; circa 1800s.  
Home of the Ohio State School for the Blind from 1874  
to 1953. Currently home to Columbus Public Health.

## OUR HISTORIC HOME

Construction began on 240 Parsons Avenue in 1869. When completed in 1874, it became home to the Ohio State School for the Blind, initially housing more than 300 students. Between 1839 and 1901, more than 2,000 students were enrolled.

**In 1973, the original structure at 240 Parsons Avenue was placed on the National Register of Historic Places.**

After the Ohio State School for the Blind vacated the building in 1953, other agencies called 240 Parsons home, including the Ohio Department of Public Safety (1954 to 1997) and the Ohio Civil Rights Commission (1974 to 1997).

In 2001, this site became the main campus for public health services for the City of Columbus, and other central Ohio residents and visitors.



## PUBLIC HEALTH IN COLUMBUS

Columbus Public Health serves as the local health department for the nation's 15th largest city, Columbus, Ohio. In this capacity, Columbus Public Health identifies and addresses public health threats, enforces laws that protect health, and provides services to prevent and control disease.

With the ultimate goal of healthier, safer people, we focus on: environmental health; maternal and child health; infectious disease; community health; disease monitoring; linkage to care; planning; and, emergency preparedness and response.

### The Roots of Columbus Public Health

The earliest record of organized public health in Columbus dates back to 1833 when the mayor appointed a committee of five citizens to wage war on an Asiatic cholera outbreak. By 1835, this board was appointed as a permanent body to become active whenever a health emergency such as cholera, smallpox or typhoid arose.



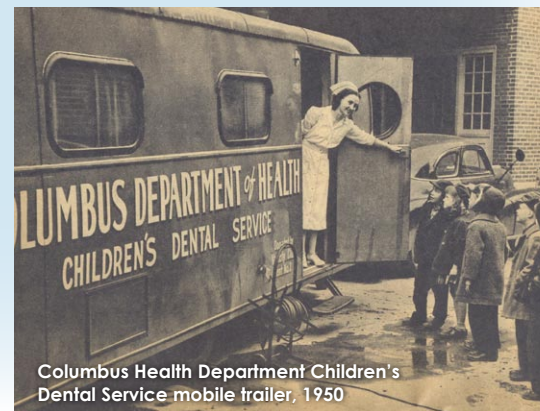
The Board's role later expanded to include meat and dairy inspections and neighborhood nursing services for mothers and babies.

Through the years, public health's accomplishments include fluoridating drinking water, creating safer foods, improving the health of mothers and babies, reducing tobacco use, reducing deaths from heart disease and stroke, and vaccinating children and adults.

### Public Health Touches Everyone

Public Health touches everyone, regardless of race, gender, religion, location or socioeconomic status.

Public health is also everyone's responsibility, from individual choices to public policy. By working together, community organizations, businesses, faith-based groups, schools and others can make huge changes as evidenced in campaigns to fight polio, stop drunk drivers, and provide early prenatal care.



## OUR FUTURE

Our community and our nation now face a world where natural and manmade disasters, and emerging infectious diseases are growing public threats, which demand a public health response.

Today's challenges include the potential for public exposure to smallpox and anthrax through dirty bombs, global warming, racial health disparities, access to care issues, obesity, and antibiotic resistant "bugs". Some previously defeated pathogens such as TB, Pertussis, and pandemic flu also are re-emerging.

While these challenges are different than they were at our inception, our mission remains the same as it was 175 years ago – to help the people of Columbus and Central Ohio lead healthier and safer lives.

**Public health programs & professionals...**

*Protecting you and your family every day.*

