

# The importance of the Next Generation of the **PUBLIC HEALTH WORKFORCE**



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**T**he year 2020 witnessed several significant public health challenges, including the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, conflict and humanitarian emergencies, mental health issues, poverty, climate change, child and reproductive health challenges, misinformation and an infodemic.

Globally, health systems were overwhelmed. Public health departments faced persistent

challenges having inadequate staff, limited funding and a lack of data and technology infrastructures. These factors affected many roles in both public health and healthcare delivery. Despite the availability of new technologies to facilitate timely data exchange, public health departments struggled to take advantage of these advancements.

**The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the focus on public health and the need to invest in health systems.**

It also showed an urgent need for a highly qualified, diverse public health workforce that is essential to addressing social determinants of health and health disparities.

Public Health 3.0 calls on public health leaders to serve as Chief Health Strategists who will engage in cross-sector partnerships along with upgrading and monitoring data systems, with an emphasis on hyperlocal data.

It also calls for hiring a diverse and inclusive workforce and providing foundational public health capabilities.

**Addressing complex public health issues requires innovative, data driven and evidence-informed interdisciplinary, multi-sector and transnational collaboration.**

The next generation of the public health workforce will need to acquire knowledge in resource management and supply chain logistics from the field of business and the skills to tackle sources of misinformation.

Additional public health workforce competencies include: resilience, communication, cultural agility, empathy, compassion, flexibility and the ability to cope with failure.

Employers will be looking for proficiencies in critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, adaptability, collaboration, teamwork, emotional intelligence, self-regulation, digital technology

and the ability to work with diverse populations.

Building data literacy skills in those acting as public health decision makers—from policy makers to local implementing partners—will also be a priority.

**There is an urgent need to establish an adequately skilled public health workforce for a broader range of employment options.**

The public health system is dealing with rapid turnover in the public health workforce. The workforce needs to develop qualifications, tools and technologies necessary to respond quickly to emerging public health challenges.

Today's public health workforce needs essential skills and expertise that extend beyond

the traditional competencies. There needs to be an emphasis on strategic and systems thinking, translating science to policy and building the repertoire of proficiency for public health practitioners to serve as chief health strategists.

Public Health 3.0 requires a workforce that can **REAIM** Public Health **IDEAS** by integrating principles of:

**Research, Entrepreneurship, Analytics, Informatics and Management** based on the pillars of: **Inclusivity, Diversity, Equity, Accessibility and Sustainability**

to build a better future for societies and communities at large.

