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## **The Virginia Department of Health**

### **Role and Purpose**

The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) is a comprehensive organization, offering a variety of services to Virginia citizens. The VDH offers services through a central office located in Richmond, 35 health districts and more than 100 local health departments. Most services offered relate to health promotion, disease prevention, and environmental protection.

Programs and services offered by the VDH are based on community needs or concerns. The categories outlined below are an overview of services that may interest adults. This should not be considered a complete list of the services offered by VDH. Each health district offers services for adults as well as children and adolescents, including school immunizations. For additional program and service information, you may contact your local health department or visit the Virginia Department of Health website, [www.vdh.virginia.gov](http://www.vdh.virginia.gov).

### **Activities and Services**

#### **Vital Records**

This service is offered through the [Office of Vital Records](#) in Richmond. Citizens can get certified copies of birth, death, marriage and divorce certificates. Each certificate is \$12.00. Checks should be made payable to State Health Department. Certificates can be requested through the mail, however, specific information must be included. For additional information, contact the Office of Vital Records Customer Service Representatives at 1-804-662-6200 or by mail:

VDH, Office of Vital Records  
PO Box 1000  
Richmond, Virginia 23218-1000  
(804) 662-6200

**Health Services:** The following adult health services are offered at some local health departments:

- Blood Pressure Screening,
- Cholesterol Screening,
- General Medical Clinic,
- Immigration screening,
- Refugee Screening,
- Public Health Nursing (includes home visits for health and wellness checks or healthcare supervision), Cardiovascular Risk Reduction programs to help educate citizens about risk factors),
- Breast and Cervical Cancer education and awareness programs (educate people about the importance of early detection),
- Weight Control programs,
- Smoking Cessation programs,
- Nutrition programs, and
- Other educational programs.

### **Communicable Disease Control**

VDH helps control the spread of communicable diseases. They help locate the source of an outbreak. They also provide vaccines or immunizations to help protect citizens. Services include, but are not limited to:

- Examinations and treatment for spreadable diseases such as
- Tuberculosis,
- Testing and treatment for sexually transmitted diseases such as syphilis and gonorrhea,
- Testing and referral for HIV/AIDS
- Flu and Pneumonia shots, and
- Immunizations required for Foreign Travel.

### **Environmental Health**

VDH makes sure public drinking water and public food sources are safe. The VDH handles complaints regarding food at hospitals, nursing homes, and other types of facilities. Complaints about public health and environmental nuisances are also handled through VDH. VDH also makes sure land around Virginia's nuclear power plants is safe and administers the largest shellfish sanitation program in the United

States.

## **Quality of Care**

The Virginia Department of Health, Office of Licensure and Certification (OLC) Complaint Unit inspects, certifies and licenses hospitals, nursing homes, home health agencies, and hospice agencies. The Board of Health sets standards for medical facilities and services (i.e. hospitals, outpatient surgical hospitals, nursing facilities, home health organizations, hospice organizations, and Managed Care Health Insurance Plans). The Code of Virginia guides the Board of Health. The Virginia Department of Health sees that these medical services and facilities meet minimum standards as determined by the Board of Health and the Code of Virginia.

The OLC Complaint Unit investigates complaints from the public on non-compliance with the medical services listed above. The VDH has a toll-free complaint hotline: 1-800-955-1819, or for the Metro Richmond area: (804) 367-2106.

## **Cost and Coverage**

Cost for services at local health departments vary. It depends on the service offered. Services may be offered at no charge. Some services have a flat fee. Some services are offered on a sliding fee scale. A sliding fee scale means that the fee is adjusted based on the amount of income you make. So, the more income you have available, the larger the fee you will pay for the service. Local health departments also accept Medicare and Medicaid. To find the local health department nearest you, search this database using your zip code and the keywords: health department.

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