1.2 What is Public Health?

Public health is the science of protecting and improving the health of families and communities through promotion of healthy lifestyles, research for disease and injury prevention and detection and control of infectious diseases.

Overall, public health is concerned with protecting the health of entire populations. These populations can be as small as a local neighborhood, or as big as an entire country or region of the world.

Public health professionals try to prevent problems from happening or recurring through implementing educational programs, recommending policies, administering services and conducting research – in contrast to clinical professionals, such as physicians, who focus primarily on treating individuals after they become sick or injured. Public health also works to limit health disparities. A large part of public health is promoting healthcare equity, quality and accessibility.