

PRC History

In 1984, Congress authorized the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to create a network of academic health centers to conduct applied public health research. CDC was funded in 1986 to provide leadership, technical assistance, and oversight for this network called the Prevention Research Centers (PRC) Program.

2021 — In a first-of-its-kind opportunity, CDC awarded \$13 million in supplemental funding to all 26 PRCs. Each PRC received \$500,000 to form a new network, the [Vaccine Confidence Network](#), to examine COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy in local communities, promote vaccine confidence, increase vaccine uptake, and reduce disparities. These activities are intended to reduce the incidence and burden of COVID-19 in the United States.

2020 — CDC funds an additional center for the 2019-2024 funding cycle.

2019 — CDC funds [25 centers](#) for a 5-year period.

2016 — PRC celebrates 30 years of building healthier communities.

2015 — CDC funds 11 Special Interest Project (SIP) awards to PRCs to design, test, and disseminate effective applied public health prevention research strategies.

2014 — CDC funds 26 new centers for a 5-year period.

CDC funds 56 SIP awards to 21 PRCs to design, test, and disseminate effective applied public health prevention research strategies.

PRCs collaborate to add two thematic networks, [Global and Territorial Health Research Network](#) [↗](#) and [Workplace Health Research Network](#) [↗](#) to the existing five thematic networks.

2011 — CDC gives the 2011 Charles C. Shepard Science Award to a scientific paper about the Breastfeeding, Antivirals, and Nutrition (BAN) study. This study was a special interest project awarded to the PRC at the [University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill](#) [↗](#).

2010 — PRC Program co-sponsors the 20th National Conference on Chronic Disease Prevention and Control.

The PRC Program conducts joint 2010 conference with [Society for Public Health Education](#) [↗](#).

Four PRCs are funded through the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to conduct Comparative Effectiveness Research. These 2-year projects compare the benefits and harms of different public health strategies to prevent, diagnose, and monitor health conditions in community settings.

2009 — CDC funds 37 PRCs for the 2010–2014 research period.

Centers collaborate on new thematic network [Nutrition and Obesity Policy Research and Evaluation Network](#) [↗](#).

2008 — CDC-convened Blue Ribbon Panel of external experts release a report assessing the PRC Program.

2007 — PRCs collaborate on new thematic network, [Managing Epilepsy Well Network](#) [↗](#).

2006 — [Saint Louis PRC](#) [↗](#) collaborates with the National Community Committee on a training project that helps community members understand the concepts, language, and processes used in public health research.

2005 — Centers collaborate to form the former thematic network, Cardiovascular Health Network.

2004 — CDC acknowledges 20 years of PRCs' achievements.

CDC completes a competitive peer review of applications for PRCs and announces the 2004–2009 research period for 33 centers. Together, the 33 centers conduct nearly 500 applied research projects to address topics such as diabetes, aging, and cancer control.

The PRCs collaborate on new thematic network, [Physical Activity Policy Research Network Plus](#) . (now [Physical Activity Policy Research and Evaluation Network](#))

2003 — The PRC Program adopts a framework, or logic model, for conceptualizing the research process at the national level.

National Community Committee holds its first yearly retreat in Houston, Texas.

2002 — The National Community Committee is created and holds its first official meeting to allow discussions among 40 community members. The NCC promotes equality in researcher-community relations across the network, and helped community representatives share resources, knowledge, and skills.

Centers collaborate to form new thematic networks, [Cancer Prevention & Control Research Network](#) and Healthy Aging Research Network (HAN).

Two additional centers are selected to expand the network's research capacity in both urban and rural health issues and brought the total number of centers to 28.

2001 — The 2-year PRC Fellowship Program sponsored by CDC and the Association of Schools of Public Health (ASPH) is established for doctoral-level students of minority racial or ethnic origin. (*no longer an active program*)

Two additional centers enhance the program's research depth and breadth and brought the total number of centers to 26.

The PRC Program co-sponsors CDC's Chronic Disease Prevention and Control Conference.

2000 — The [University of Kentucky](#) is added to reduce the disproportionate burden of cancer in central Appalachia and brought the number of centers to 24.

1990s — PRCs collaborate to form five thematic networks. Thematic networks are a type of special interest project that fund several PRCs to work together on a specific health issue.

- Tobacco Prevention and Control
- Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System
- School Health
- Women's Cardiovascular Health
- Oral Health

Networking concept continued for new themes; those above became inactive over time.

1998 — Congress reauthorizes the PRC Program. Nine centers are added to expand regional scope and broaden research themes and brought the total number of centers to 23.

1997 — The [Institute of Medicine](#) establishes a 10-member committee and develops a [review](#) of the program, noting achievements and proposing an agenda for the next 10 years.

1996 — The [University of Minnesota](#) is added to address the national health concern about teenage pregnancy.

1995 — The [National Institutes of Health](#) selects the PRC Program for the community component of the Women's Health Initiative.

1994 — Four additional centers bring prevention research to tribal governments, Appalachia, and the Ozarks and brought the total number of centers to 13.

1993 — The PRC Program expands from three PRCs to nine.

A supplemental funding mechanism is introduced for Special Interest Projects (SIPs) sponsored by CDC's centers, institutes, and offices.

1990 — The [University of Illinois, Chicago](#)  and Columbia University are added.

1987 — PRC faculty and staff develops the first Community Health Worker program in the state of Arizona, Un Comienzo Sano (A Healthy Start). The program was developed in collaboration with the local community health center in Somerton and implemented by students from the UA medical school, the AZ Area Health Education Center (AHEC), and local providers.

1986 — PRC Program takes shape as the first three research centers are funded.

- [University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill](#) 
- [University of Washington](#) 
- [University of Texas, Houston](#) 

1984 — Congress authorizes the Secretary of [Health and Human Services](#)  to select academic health centers to conduct community-based public health research. CDC is identified as the administrator of PRC Program.

1981 — Public health leaders propose a network for applied public health research.

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