

Chapter 2

Preventing Disease or Promoting Health

Student assignments and activities designed to enhance learning and stimulate critical thinking.

1. Describe how the role of public health changed over the 20th century and how it has developed to the present. What do you think will be the role of public health in the future?
2. What is the present role of government, schools, communities, parents, children, and role models in public health? What do you think would be the best way to increase public health awareness? What are some of the challenges to improving the population's lifestyle to be a healthier one?
3. Fashion models are often considered to be underweight. Search the Internet for policies that set a minimum weight for models. Use the following keywords to help guide your search: models, rules/policies/laws, underweight, minimum weight. Where did you find this website? What is your opinion of this policy?
4. List three nutrition-related diseases. Describe how each of these diseases can be prevented through strong public health policy initiatives.
5. Read about the social-ecological model as a framework for health promotion (www.stepstohealthierclarkco.org/docs/steps_sustainability.pdf and http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/obesity/state_programs/se_model.htm). How can this model be used to promote the four healthy lifestyle characteristics (HLCs): nonsmoking, healthy weight, fruit and vegetable consumption, and regular physical activity? Give an example of an intervention at each level for each HLC.

	Nonsmoking	Healthy Weight	Fruit & Vegetable Consumption	Regular Physical Activity
Individual				
Interpersonal				
Organizational				
Community				
Society/Policy/Systems				

6. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires all federal agencies to consider the potential environmental impact of their proposed actions. To meet this requirement, federal agencies prepare a detailed statement—known as an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)—to help ensure that all environmental effects are thought of in the policy and decision-making process. Unfortunately, similar efforts are not required to assess potential health impacts; many public policies and federal programs, such as transportation, education, housing, and welfare, do not have health impact as their primary goal, and do not consider health when making decisions. A potentially useful tool for policy makers, then, is a Health Impact Statement (HIS), which would take into account the health impact of proposed policies or programs.

Part 1. Search the Internet for some examples of HISs.

- A. How has the HIS been applied?
- B. What were the findings?
- C. Did the proposed policy or program change as a result of the HIS?

Part 2. Using THOMAS, choose a piece of legislation related to education or housing that has been introduced to the current Congress.

- A. What questions would you ask if you were performing an HIS on this piece of legislation?
- B. With what other health and/or non-health professionals and stakeholders would you need to collaborate?
- C. What organizations and/or agencies would be able to provide you with the additional information you need?
- D. How do you think the results of your results would affect the final legislation?