

FAMILY HEALTH



● Chronic Disease ● Environmental Health ● Emergency Preparedness ● Family Health
● Immunizations ● Infectious Disease ● Public Health Laboratory ● Local Public Health ● Minority Health

In the early 1900s, one of every 10 infants died before age one. Mothers' suffering was equally harsh, as one in nine died from pregnancy-related complications.

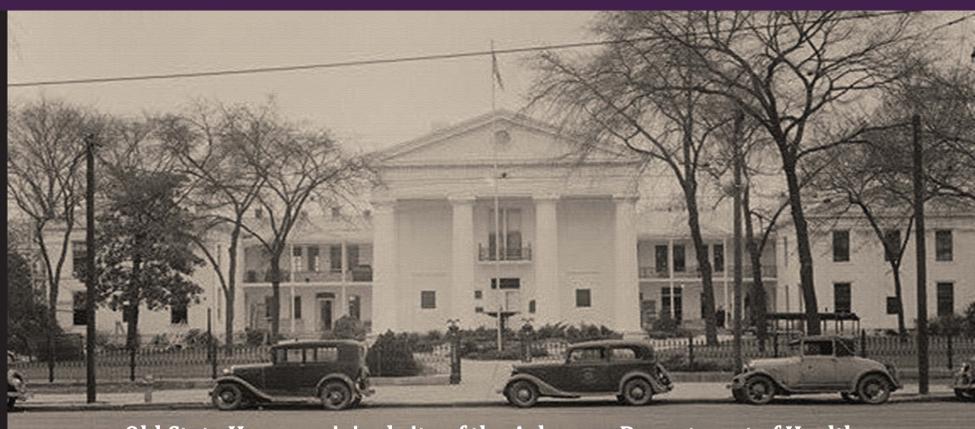
Programs began to help families during severe droughts and floods. The federal Sheppard-Towner Maternity and Infancy Act of 1921 was the first federal program created just for women and children. Since 1935, Title V of the Social Security Act has ensured the continuation and expansion of many programs and services, especially in rural areas.

Public health nurses – aided by midwives – have played an integral role in addressing conditions of disparities in care and access to services for indigent and minority women and their babies. During WWII, the Health Department started a successful “granny” midwife program to train midwives to deliver babies because so many physicians and nurses were lost to the war effort.

Over the years, programs have grown and expanded to include training and resources focused on better nutrition and lifestyle choices. In 1974, the Arkansas Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program began to prescribe supplemental foods tailored to meet special dietary needs. The program has been an effective tool in reducing the number of low birth-weight babies, improving overall birth outcomes, helping children develop into stronger and healthier adults, and reducing some of the state's Medicaid costs.

For a century, the Health Department has been looking out for the health and well-being of Arkansas families. Though death rates have declined more than 90 percent for mothers and babies over the last 100 years, mortality rates are still high. Efforts continue today to improve the life of baby, mother, and family.

100
Years
of Public Health
in Arkansas



Old State House, original site of the Arkansas Department of Health