

Public Health Response Contingency Account

October 2025

Overview

The public health response contingency account is an account in the special revenue fund in the state treasury. When the requirements in statute are satisfied, the commissioner of health may make expenditures from the account for activities to plan for or respond to pandemic influenza or a communicable or infectious disease or to respond to an outbreak of COVID-19.

Contingent Funding for Public Health Response Activities

The public health response contingency account was established in 2017 as an account in the special revenue fund in the state treasury. This account makes state money available for public health response activities¹ at any time, including when the legislature is not in session. Money is transferred into the account by law, and in statute money in the account is appropriated to the commissioner of health for public health response activities, if the requirements in statute are satisfied for making expenditures from the account. The account is governed by [Minnesota Statutes, section 144.4199](#).

Between July 1, 2017, and July 1, 2025, a total of \$78,689,000 was transferred from the general fund into the account, and the account's balance as of July 1, 2025, was \$7,800,000. Of this balance, \$2,800,000 is available for activities to plan for or respond to pandemic influenza or a communicable or infectious disease, and \$5,000,000 is available for public health response activities to respond to an outbreak of COVID-19.

Requirements to Make Expenditures from the Account

In general, to make expenditures from the public health response contingency account, the commissioner must:

- make determinations that there is an outbreak of pandemic influenza or another communicable or infectious disease that requires a public health response and that the response is reasonably expected to require more resources than are available in affected jurisdictions;
- notify the relevant federal agency that the influenza or other disease meets one of the criteria listed in statute² for posing a significant risk of harm to the affected population;

¹ A public health response is defined as immediate public health activities to protect the health and safety of the public due to pandemic influenza or an outbreak of a communicable or infectious disease.

² The influenza or other disease must meet at least one of the following criteria: (1) be reasonably expected to require the impacted population to be evacuated, ill individuals to be relocated to temporary care facilities, or

- seek assistance from other sources with costs of the public health response;
- if Department of Health staff or resources may need to be diverted for the public health response, notify the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative committees with jurisdiction over health and human services policy and finance on the event requiring a public health response, the public health response required, and estimates of staff and resources that may need to be diverted; and
- seek review and recommendation from the Legislative Advisory Commission, using the procedure for review of federal funds.³

Authorized Expenditures of Money in the Account

There are two categories of authorized expenditures from the account: (1) expenditures to address pandemic influenza or an outbreak of a communicable or infectious disease; and (2) expenditures to respond to a COVID-19 outbreak.

Expenditures for Pandemic Influenza or Communicable Disease. Under the first category, the Department of Health, other state agencies, local units of government, and health care organizations and providers can use the money to address pandemic influenza or an outbreak of a communicable or infectious disease.⁴

The Department of Health and local units of government are permitted to expend money for activities such as staffing,⁵ information technology, supplies and equipment, laboratory testing and capacity, and the purchase of vaccines.

The commissioner of health may also:

- reimburse health care organizations and providers for their public health response costs,
- provide money to other state agencies for public health response activities, and
- distribute grants to health care organizations and providers to prepare for or respond to pandemic influenza or a communicable or infectious disease.

Health care organizations and providers receiving a grant must use grant funds for purposes listed in statute, including:

- temporary sites for testing, treatment beds, or isolation or quarantine;

the provision of replacement essential community services; (2) pose a probability of a large number of deaths, serious injuries, or long-term disabilities; (3) involve widespread exposure to an infectious agent that poses a significant risk of substantial future harm to a large number of people; or (4) pose a significant risk of harm to a large number of people or a high rate of morbidity or mortality.

³ The procedure for review of federal funds is in [Minnesota Statutes, section 3.3005](#), subd. 5.

⁴ [Minn. Stat., § 144.4199](#), subds. 4, 4a.

⁵ Money in the account cannot be used to increase the number of full-time, permanent employees at the Department of Health unless expressly authorized in law.

- staff overtime, hiring additional staff, and training;
- protective and treatment supplies and equipment; and
- other expenses that will not generate income for the organization or provider after the disease outbreak ends.

Expenditures for COVID-19 Response. A second category allows money to be used for a public health response related to an outbreak of COVID-19.⁶ Money in this category cannot be expended for public health response activities to address pandemic influenza or other communicable or infectious diseases. To use money for this purpose, the commissioner is not required to:

- make the determinations in [section 144.4199](#), subdivision 3,
- seek assistance with public health response costs from other available sources, or
- provide information on the outbreak and the proposed response to the chairs and ranking minority members of the health and human services committees in the legislature.

Uses of Money in the Account to Date

The following table lists the uses for which the commissioner has made expenditures from the public health response contingency account in calendar years 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020. The commissioner has not made expenditures from the account since 2020.

Calendar Year	Uses of Money in the Account
2017	<p>Multidrug-resistant tuberculosis: community outreach; training of health care providers and adult day center staff, attendees, and surveyors; contact investigations and screenings</p> <p>Syphilis: screening, identification, and treatment of syphilis cases; prevention of cases of congenital syphilis; grants to Tribal Nations; education and outreach</p> <p>Measles: measles testing, validation of a measles genotype laboratory test, surveys of families who received the MMR vaccine</p>
2018	<p>Multidrug-resistant tuberculosis: community outreach; training of health care providers and adult day center staff and attendees; contact investigations and screenings</p> <p>Syphilis: screening, identification, and treatment of syphilis cases; prevention of cases of congenital syphilis; grants to Tribal Nations; education and outreach</p> <p>Measles: validation of a measles genotype laboratory test, surveys of families who received the MMR vaccine, community engagement</p>

⁶ [Laws 2020, ch. 66, § 1.](#)

Calendar Year	Uses of Money in the Account
2019	Syphilis: screening, identification, and treatment of syphilis cases; prevention of cases of congenital syphilis; grants to Tribal Nations Measles: community engagement, health care provider education
2020	COVID-19: purchase and improvements to laboratory and medical equipment; grants to political subdivisions for COVID-19 response activities; noncapital assets such as telephone equipment; staff costs; education and outreach; software maintenance; supplies and materials, including office, cleaning, and protective supplies

Sources: MDH, Public Health Response Contingency Account Update and Expenditures reports, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021; email communication with MDH staff, 8/7/25.



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