

### LESSON 3: DEFINE THE PROBLEM WHICH IMPACTS PUBLIC HEALTH

In this lesson, you learned more about problem identification, the first step in the policy process. The objectives for this lesson included:

- **Identify the health problem.**
- **Describe the key components of a problem definition.**
- **Determine the health policy problem scope.**
- **Identify sources of information to identify the causes of the problem.**
- **Identify stakeholders and their perspectives on the problem.**

#### KEY POINTS

- To identify a public health problem, policy analysts review surveillance data or study results. They may also consult with other functional experts such as epidemiologists, health scientists, and community public health officials.
- When developing a problem statement, it is good to be specific, and to quantify the problem when possible.
- One of the analytical roles is in discovering, collating, interpreting, critiquing, and synthesizing ideas and data that others have already developed.
- Stakeholder perspectives are an important part of the entire policy analysis process.
- Stakeholders can be involved in crafting the problem definition by providing context to the problem that you may not have obtained through the literature. They can be important sources for supplementing your knowledge of the “who, what, when, where, and how” questions by adding local context to, or telling stories about, the issue.
- There are numerous briefs on the CDC and other organization websites that can give you a good idea of how others express problem statements.

