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POWERS ACT***The History*
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Although both the Turning Point Model State Public Health Act and the Model State Emergency Health Powers Act were developed as tools to assist state and local governments in assessing their public health laws, it is important to understand the differences between these two pieces of model legislation.

Following the 2001 anthrax attacks, it became apparent that many states did not have adequate laws to handle large-scale emergency situations that could affect public health, such as a widespread smallpox outbreak.

With funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, and the Milbank Memorial Fund, legal experts at the Center for Law and the Public's Health at Georgetown and Johns Hopkins Universities developed the Model State Emergency Health Powers Act (MSEHPA) in collaboration with national organizations representing governors, legislators, public health officials and attorneys general. The MSEHPA was designed to help states review and consider their public health laws so they would be prepared to handle contemporary public health emergencies.

The MSEHPA was released in December 2001 and since that time, 43 states have introduced bills based on some or all of the provisions of the MSEHPA and out of these 43, 32 states and the District of Columbia have passed these bills.

Prior to the release of the MSEHPA, Lawrence O. Gostin and James G. Hodge, Jr., of the Center, were working with Turning Point's Public Health Statute Modernization Collaborative to develop a tool for state, local and tribal governments to assess their current public health laws and to identify areas that need updating and improving. After three years, the Turning Point Model State Public Health Act (Turning Point Act) is ready for release.

The Turning Point Act provides a solid foundation of public health laws that drive regular public health practice, clarify responsibilities and powers, and provide modern approaches for controlling contagious diseases.

Many provisions of the MSEHPA have been incorporated into the Turning Point Act, making it a comprehensive tool for states to use to ensure that they have strong public health laws that can address modern public health needs in everyday and emergency situations.

For more information about the Model State Emergency Health Powers Act, visit www.publichealthlaw.net.

For more information about the
Turning Point Act, visit
www.turningpointprogram.org or
www.hss.state.ak.us/dph/improving/turningpoint/MPSHA.htm.