



2023 Legislative Action Priorities

Supporting Minnesota's Local Public Health System

LPHA supports a significant, statewide increase in funding to support local public health foundational responsibilities.

Foundational public health responsibilities need to be available in health departments across the state so the public health system can work as a whole. Currently, the capacity of Minnesota's local health departments varies widely across the state. All Minnesotans should have access to good quality public health services, regardless of where they live. Foundational responsibilities must be in place in every health department, so they are always ready to serve their community and achieve equitable health outcomes. Local health departments should have a baseline of organizational competencies such as assessment and surveillance of health threats, emergency preparedness and response, infectious disease prevention and control, communications, development of community partnerships, administrative competencies, and expert staff they can leverage to protect and promote public health. Investing in prevention and a strong local public health infrastructure pays off by saving health care and other public program costs, such as those from corrections and child protection.

Strengthening Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) and Response Capacity

LPHA supports state-level investment in Public Health Emergency Preparedness to ensure strong future response to emergencies and health threats.

Responding to disasters and emergencies—whether health focused or not—is a core responsibility of Minnesota's local public health departments. The COVID-19 pandemic reinforced the need to have a strong infrastructure that can support a robust response to emergencies, both through planning and response. Currently, Minnesota's PHEP activities are funded by grants from the federal government, with no state-level investment. This state-level investment is crucial. Past proposals to redistribute PHEP funds and a series of funding cuts highlight the vulnerability of federal funding and have compromised local public health's ability to respond to emergencies. Although there was increased federal investment due to COVID-19, historically, federal funding has been cut drastically (from nearly \$16 million in 2002 to \$9.2 million in 2019) and funding expectations were not realigned to reflect the cuts.

Responding to Public Health Workforce Shortages

LPHA supports a focus on and investment in the public health workforce.

Since 2008 local health departments across the United States have lost more than 20% of their workforce, more than 50,000 jobs. A significant increase in investment in the public health workforce, focused on retention of the current workforce and bringing in new skilled workers, is needed to ensure there is a robust workforce to provide crucial public health services into the future. Programs such as loan forgiveness, support of the public health AmeriCorps program, and investment in training and recruitment of public health workers will be key in recruiting and retaining a robust public health workforce in the years to come.

Addressing Community Health Needs

LPHA supports policy and funding to address post-COVID-19 community health needs and ongoing stable, statewide funding for the Statewide Health Improvement Partnership to help Minnesotans live healthier, longer lives and continue to drive down state health care costs.

Local public health plays an important role in addressing social determinates of health that have a direct link to poor health outcomes. COVID-19 has deeply impacted people in our state, further exacerbating existing health inequities. Local public health will continue to serve a leading role in addressing ongoing community needs such as housing challenges, food insecurity and healthy eating, violence, higher rates of addiction, and mental health challenges.

About the Local Public Health Association of Minnesota



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

The Local Public Health Association of Minnesota (LPHA) is a voluntary, non-profit organization that works to achieve a strong local public health system through leadership and collective advocacy on behalf of Minnesota's county, city and tribal local public health departments. The Association represents more than 230 public health directors, supervisors and community health services administrators throughout the state. LPHA is an affiliate of the Association of Minnesota Counties.