



# 2024 Legislative Action Priorities

## Supporting Minnesota's Local Public Health System

***LPHA supports continued investment 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. 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, data analysis, infectious disease prevention and control, communications, and development of community partnerships. 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. LPHA is grateful for increased investment in local public health during the last legislative session and look forward to continued efforts to strengthen our public health system.

## Responding to Public Health Workforce Shortages

***LPHA supports policy changes that enable local health departments to fill open positions and retain current employees.***

Since 2008, local health departments across the United States have lost more than 20% of their workforce, more than 50,000 jobs. A significant 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. In Minnesota, local health departments report difficulties in hiring crucial positions such as public health nurses, health educators, and more. Further, many local health departments are struggling to fill the statutorily mandated Medical Consultant role with a physician, particularly in areas where there are shortages of medical providers. LPHA supports policy change that would expand medical consultants to other prescribing providers such as nurse practitioners or physician's assistants. Programs such as loan forgiveness and investment in training and recruitment of public health workers will also remain key in recruiting and retaining a robust public health workforce in the future.

## Strengthening Technical Assistance for Local Public Health Departments in Adult-Use Cannabis

***LPHA supports investment in technical assistance and coordination support for local and tribal public health departments around adult-use cannabis through the Minnesota Department of Health.***

Local public health departments are grateful for the investment of \$10 million per year, beginning in FY 2025, focused on creating and disseminating educational materials, providing safe use and prevention training, technical assistance, and community engagement around adult-use cannabis. Local public health departments are already receiving and responding to cannabis related educational and technical assistance requests from their communities. LPHA supports reallocation of up to 10 percent of the previously dedicated funds to the Minnesota Department of Health to build staff capacity and legal technical assistance in MDH. This reallocation would support local and tribal public health departments through statewide coordination to ensure sharing of resources and reduced duplication across the state. LPHA also supports efforts to maintain local authority and public health protections such as the MN Clean Indoor Air Act.

## 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.***

Local public health plays an important role in addressing social determinants 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.



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

### About 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 245 public health directors, supervisors and community health services administrators throughout the state. LPHA is an affiliate of the Association of Minnesota Counties.

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