



NEW YORK STATE ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY HEALTH OFFICIALS

Leading the Way to Healthier Communities

NYSACHO 2024-2025 Legislative Platform

The New York State Association of County Health Officials (“NYSACHO”) is a membership association representing local health departments in New York State. Through the provision of technical assistance and training, NYSACHO supports the work of local health departments (LHDs) to implement the New York State Prevention Agenda priorities.

NYSACHO speaks as the collective voice for LHDs in the legislative and regulatory arenas, by advocating for data driven, evidence-supported legislative and regulatory public health and solutions and requesting direct state funding to LHDs for implemented and pending public health policy. The legislative agenda for NYSACHO is based on five key public health principles with legislative priorities in seven public health areas: (1) Disease Control, (2) Environmental Health, (3) Family Health, (4) Rural Health, (5) Workforce Development/Funding, (6) Emerging Public Health Threats, and Substance Use/Cannabis Policy. Below is a summary of our main issues in each of these categories.

NYSACHO’s key public health principles, which dictate the legislative priorities in seven public health areas are as follows:

1. Promoting Health Equity

NYSACHO supports public policy that addresses systemic and structural barriers to assuring fair and just access to good health for all people.

2. Full Funding for Policy Implementation

NYSACHO supports public health policy goals that are accompanied by sustained state funding to ensure successful implementation of new or expanded public health policies and programs and opposes the enactment of state public health policy changes that fail to anticipate and fully fund local public health workforce, enforcement, and other needs.

3. Protecting Local Public Health Authority

NYSACHO supports the collaborative model of protecting public health through strategic partnerships with the State Department of Health while also supporting the role of home rule and local public health authorities having freedom of jurisdiction as necessary to respond and enact local public health policies addressing community-level public health needs.

4. Assuring equitable policies for all Local Health Departments

NYSACHO supports public policy proposals that have statewide applicability for all local

health departments so as to ensure that there is not a statutorily included or excluded single or limited group of local health departments in regard to new or expanded responsibilities, authorities and/or access to funding, data or other resources.

5. Modernizing and Improving Data Systems and Access

NYSACHO supports public policy that improves and modernizes public health data surveillance systems and ensures bidirectional flow of data to strengthen local access to real-time data to inform public health interventions.

These five key principles guide and direct NYSACHO's legislative priorities in the following seven key subject areas:

Disease Control

NYSACHO supports comprehensive national and statewide disease and infection control policies and measures aimed to strengthen LHDs capacity to prevent, monitor, screen, treat, enhance, educate and control chronic and infectious disease; protect communities from communicable disease, including sexually transmitted and vector-borne transmission; increase immunization rates for all recommended vaccinations, combat misinformation about the most effective ways to prevent the spread of infectious disease; and reduce the incidence of chronic diseases through prevention by enacting policies that improve nutrition, food security, increase physical activity and prevent tobacco use.

Environmental Health

NYSACHO supports Environmental Health related legislation and policies that strengthen local enforcement authority, funding and eliminate statutory or regulatory loopholes to ensure compliance with public health laws; reduce and mitigate exposure to environmental contaminants, including lead; indemnify local public health officials from liability when attempts to enforce Public Health Laws are blocked by violator non-compliance to ensure fair processes in enforcement actions; support sufficient civil penalties to compel compliance and assure the cost of non-compliance is borne by the regulated entities; and protect communities from food, water, air, or vector-borne disease transmission.

Family Health

NYSACHO supports Family, Child and Maternal Health legislation and policies that mitigate health impacts and support treatment and recovery options for pregnant persons who use drugs and children born to persons who use drugs; increase access to and insurer coverage of comprehensive high-quality reproductive and maternal health services, including behavioral health services, LHD maternal and child health home visiting services, and ensure fair access to comprehensive family planning services, while ensuring confidentiality of reproductive health data and promote breastfeeding and breastfeeding rights; and increase resources and capacity for oral health as a critical public health program.

Rural Health

NYSACHO supports legislation and policies designed to address the unique public health challenges of rural communities to strengthen access to emergency medical services in rural/underserved communities; address barriers and budget funding shortfalls and equitable funds distribution that are barriers to access to care and public health services unique to rural areas; and address workforce shortages and barriers to hiring in rural communities.

Workforce Development/Funding

NYSACHO supports legislation and policies that promote a strong public health infrastructure to ensure that policies addressing healthcare workforce shortages include public health; address statutory and regulatory barriers to hiring and retaining a qualified workforce; provide equitable investment and resources for all local health departments; streamline administrative requirements to reduce barriers to providing public health services; and provide flexible funding to allow deployment of resources to meet local public health needs and threats.

Emerging Public Health Threats

NYSACHO supports legislation and policies that address emerging public health threats and issues, including extreme weather events, including trends and health impacts and policies, and policies that strengthen and support medical examiner, coroner, and forensic pathology systems in their work to identify cause of death to help inform prevention approaches, particularly in the instance of unattended deaths, deaths caused by overdose, communicable disease, and suicide.

Substance Use/Cannabis Implementation

NYSACHO supports legislation that reduces preventable death and substance misuse through policies that prioritize public health and safety, that prevent misuse and exploitation of loopholes in existing substance use laws; assure public health and safety protections are at the forefront of legalized cannabis policies, protect youth from engaging in underage substance use, including vaping of tobacco and cannabis products, and strengthen existing laws to enhance these protections; take a non-punitive, human-centered approach to addressing the overdose crisis; increase access to harm reduction supplies and services that reduce the risk of overdose fatalities and the transmission of infection diseases; and ensure equitable access to treatment and recovery services while further destigmatizing prevention programming.