

ADVOCACY AGENDA

2024-25 Public Health Advocacy Priorities

Public Health supports the advancement of public policy that improves the health outcomes of Dane County residents and actively reduce health disparities. This document collects policy priorities from Public Health programs and staff, the Dane County Legislative Agenda, and other state and national partners.

DEPARTMENT-LEVEL PRIORITIES

Dane County Legislative Agenda

Public Health Services: Support initiatives that strengthen the ability of local health departments to maintain effective community health initiatives, enhance health and racial equity, and promote optimal health outcomes for all residents. Oppose efforts that prevent local health departments from advocating for strong public health parameters, incorporating health considerations into policy decision-making, and providing community health services based on scientific data.

Local Public Health Emergencies: Support legislation that recognizes the critical role of local public health departments in responding to public health emergencies and provides adequate funding to respond to all threats to public health. Oppose legislation to preempt or restrict local authority to respond to public health emergencies.

COMMUNITY HEALTH

Public Health Policy Priority

Access to Comprehensive Sexual & Reproductive Health Care: Increase access to a full range of equitable and evidence-based reproductive healthcare, including safe and legal abortion. ([Public Health Position Statement](#))

Dane County Legislative Agenda

Women's Health Care: Repeal all state laws that prohibit women from having access to safe and legal abortions, that don't protect women's health and don't ensure a woman's dignity, equality and autonomy.

Support Wisconsin Well Woman Program: Support maintaining this program for breast and cervical cancer screening. Oppose cuts or service reductions.

Breastfeeding friendly workplaces: Support institutional policies that allow individuals who are breastfeeding or pumping to have space to do so.

Additional Priorities

Immunizations and Infectious Disease Prevention: Support individuals to be immunized against vaccine-preventable diseases, unless medically recommended otherwise. ([Public Health Position Statement](#))

Women, Infants, and Children: Oppose funding and eligibility changes that could impact the number of individuals who can be served through the WIC Program. (Source: APHA¹)

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Public Health Policy Priority

Perfluorinated Compounds (PFAS/PFOA/PFOS): Support adopting a state-directed threshold standard of PFAS, PFOA and PFOS as part of a comprehensive statewide plan that identifies contamination sources, remediation options, and tools to cover the associated costs with remediation. (Source: Dane County)

Dane County Legislative Agenda

Water Quality: Maintain DNR funding for water quality planning and watershed projects. Seek a fair share of state funding for inland waterways and lakes. Target state funds to where there is a high likelihood of project success, where recipient units of government have a proven track record of meeting state and local water resource goals. Support additional funding and staffing for local water quality protection and improvement.

Reduce Fine Particle Pollution: Support increased funding and new incentives for fine particle emission reduction programs, including programs that reduce emissions from transportation sources and point sources through the increased use of alternative fuels, renewable energy sources, and energy efficiency improvements.

Mercury Rules: Support changes to the mercury rules to achieve a 90% reduction per DNR rule.

Dangerous Animals and Vicious Dog Ordinance: Amend state law to allow counties to enact stricter ordinances to regulate dangerous animals and vicious dogs having countywide applicability.

Paid Sick Leave: Mandate employers to offer paid sick leave to employees in the food service industry

¹ American Public Health Association

Additional Priorities

Decrease community lead exposure²: Support efforts to mitigate lead contamination in drinking water, increase statewide awareness and educational efforts related to reducing the use of lead shot and tackle for hunting and fishing, and prevent childhood lead poisoning. Support funding for lead remediation programs to eliminate/abate lead paint, soil and pipes. (Source: Dane County, WPHA³/WALHDAB⁴)

OPERATIONS & OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

Public Health Policy Priority

Increase Funding for Local Health Departments: Support increases in funding for local health departments to match the growing demand for services and support. (Source: APHA, NACCHO⁵)

Dane County Legislative Agenda

Medicaid Expansion: Support implementation of the Medicaid expansion under the federal Affordable Care Act (ACA). Allow Wisconsin to use the Medicaid option to close the gap in BadgerCare for childless adults. Accept available federal funds for BadgerCare to ensure that thousands of Wisconsin citizens have access to quality and affordable health coverage.

Medicaid Funding: Support enabling counties to accept/administer Medicaid funding at the county level.

Additional Priorities

Strengthen and Support the Public Health Workforce: Support efforts to expand the public health workforce to support responses to the growing list of areas of focus for local health departments and retain individuals who are already working in this field. (Source: APHA, NACCHO)

Local Health Department Data Modernization: Increase support and funding for LHD data infrastructure and modernization efforts so that LHDs can continue to serve the role of community data stewards for a number of different health issues and needs. (Source: NACCHO)

² Proposed Revision. Currently appears in Dane County Legislative Agenda as “Lead Pollution” and “Lead Remediation”

³ Wisconsin Public Health Association

⁴ Wisconsin Association of Local Health Departments and Boards

⁵ National Association of County and City Health Officials

POLICY, PLANNING & EVALUATION

Public Health Policy Priority

Overdose Prevention & Response: Increase support and funding for treatment alternatives and diversion programs, staff capacity, and other tools needed to address substance misuse issues and overdose deaths related to opioids, methamphetamines, alcohol, and other drugs.

Dane County Legislative Agenda

Climate Change: Support legislative efforts to address climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions to prevent the severe adverse impacts on our economy, environment, safety, and public health. Enhance county authority and funding for county-level action planning, mitigation, adaptation, and resilience around the impacts of climate change.

Support Gun Control: Ban habitual criminals from obtaining concealed carry permits, make the purchase of a firearm for somebody who is prohibited from possessing a firearm a felony, make the possession of a concealed firearm by those prohibited under Wisconsin law a felony, and require that private gun sales be subject to criminal background checks performed by a federally licensed gun dealer. Support changes to state law that allow local gun regulations.

Income Maintenance Programs: Support funding levels and legislation that provide sufficient resources to administer non-cash benefit programs such as Food Stamps, Medical Assistance, Child Care and issue benefits to all eligible people. Oppose changes to the eligibility/enrollment process and services funded under Medicaid and Income Maintenance, which limit eligibility and could reduce the 190 number of people receiving benefits.

Minimum Wage: Support increasing the minimum wage to a living wage.

Homeless Services: Provide additional state funding for services to assist individuals, unaccompanied youth and families who are homeless. Expand state programs to address and prevent homelessness including but not limited to the Critical Assistance Program and the Tenant Based Rental Assistance Program.

Local Fair Housing Ordinances: Oppose legislation that impinges on the rights of tenants by allowing landlords to discriminate based on a tenant's income, occupation, rental history, credit information, arrest/ conviction history and Social Security number.

Affordable Housing Trust Fund: Support enabling legislation to allow Dane County to create an Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

Medicare Expansion: Support Medicare for All Act to ensure everyone has access to high quality, universal healthcare without the interruptions in care present in an employer-based for-profit system.

Additional Priorities

Gun Safety: Support the reduction of harm caused by firearms in our community through strategies that further our understanding of gun violence, reduce the ease of access to firearms by those individuals who seek to do harm, increase gun safety, support safe storage, and decrease the harm and destructiveness of firearms. ([Public Health Position Statement](#))

Injury and Violence Prevention Funding: Increase funding levels for Core State Violence and Injury Prevention Program (Core SVIPP) funding that would allow for states and local municipalities to implement, evaluate, and expand strategies to preventing their most pressing injury and violence problems. Support legislation that empowers municipalities in the range of strategies needed to reduce community violence.

Regulation of cannabis and derivatives⁶: Support efforts to legalize and regulate cannabis and its derivatives to ensure safe production, dosage, sales, and use. Fund these efforts accordingly.

Universal School Meals⁷: Increase access to universally free breakfast and lunch for all K-12 students. Maintain nutritional standards for meals that align with MyPlate dietary recommendations. (WPHA)

Drug Testing as Barrier to Public Resources⁸: Oppose legislation that would enact drug testing as a requirement for public benefits. Also oppose drug testing of youth in our public schools. (DCLA)

⁶ Proposed revision. Currently appears in the Dane County Legislative Agenda as “Medical Marijuana”

⁷ Proposed revision. Currently appears in the Dane County Legislative Agenda as “School Meals”

⁸ Proposed revision. Currently appears in the Dane County Legislative Agenda as “Drug Testing”