

2023 ADVOCACY PRIORITIES



Policy development is a core function of public health. The Kansas Public Health Association (KPHA) recognizes that many different policies can affect population health. As public health practitioners, we bring a health in all policies philosophy to policy work. To this end, KPHA supports policy efforts that address social determinants of health and equity such as: health care, behavioral health, education, access to healthy foods and safe physical activity, environmental justice, housing, and transportation.

➤ **Public Health Capacity and Preparedness**

- Advocate for a strong governmental public health system (locally and across the state) to better protect Kansas communities, prepare for adverse events and improve health.
 - Support evidence-informed policies that mitigate the spread of disease
 - Support exploration and the development of strategies to improve local health officer capacity
 - Support policies that strengthen public health authority to assure the health of the public through disease mitigation strategies
- Increase public health funding and support for public health modernization, infrastructure and workforce support

➤ **Health Care and Access**

- Advocate for expanding KanCare.
- Support access to the full range of reproductive health services

➤ **Tobacco**

- Advocate for passage of the “Kansas Roots Act” to:
 - Align Kansas age of sale (18) with federal age of sale (21)
 - Update definitions to ensure tobacco statute is more aligned with the current market (i.e. e-cigarettes, vape, synthetic nicotine)
 - Remove purchase, use and possession penalties for youth
- Support efforts to fight preemption in Kansas cities and counties

➤ **Infectious Disease**

- Support legislation that would explicitly allow and provide guidelines for Expedited Partner Therapy (EPT)
- Support public health efforts to increase immunization rates aligned with CDC recommendations and opposes further immunization exemptions. All vaccination legislation should be science and evidence based related to ACIP, CDC and guided by KDHE.
- Support vaccination regulations that protect daycare, schools, health care providers and congregate settings.



Behavioral Health

- Accelerate behavioral health initiatives in Kansas to enhance access, improve outcomes and optimize funding.
 - Promote evidence-based interventions for substance misuse harm reduction and reduced criminalization
 - Support funding for community-based and in-patient (both state and private psychiatric hospitals) crisis stabilization and treatment
 - Promote increased collaboration and support for community mental health centers and school partnerships at the local level
- Support policies that reduce suicide risk



Community Health

- Support efforts to improve school health in Kansas:
 - Support programs that improve and strengthen child nutrition and school meals programs
 - Support guidelines that increase student physical activity during the school day
- Recognize that gun violence is a public health issue. Support increased research and policies that seek to prevent gun violence
- Support local and state efforts to improve data collection; availability and sharing; and analysis
- Support exempting surveys that do not collect personally identifiable student data from the Student Data Privacy Act
- Remove barriers, maximize access and increase resources for families and individuals to access programs like SNAP and TANF.
- Support efforts to increase access to healthy food through immediate elimination of food sales tax



Environmental Health

- Support restoration of funding for the Local Environmental Protection Program (LEPP)
- Recognize that climate change is a public health issue and advocate for policy initiatives that seek to prevent and mitigate the harms of climate change
- Advocate for community water systems in Kansas to adjust the fluoride levels to the optimal amount to prevent tooth decay
- Advocate for increased fees paid into the Dry Cleaner Trust Fund which is used to clean up contaminated groundwater from dry cleaner operations and increase authority to investigate



Oral Health

- Support efforts to increase access to dental providers and expand their reach into underserved communities
- Advocate for strengthening KanCare dental benefits for all adult beneficiaries.