

2019 Federal Legislative Agenda

The Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) supports strengthening and preserving all programs that are effective to advancing the public's health and well-being. Federal, state, and local public health programs have been historically underfunded and undervalued. ASTHO supports addressing the social determinants of health and preserving current federal investments for all of these efforts, including programs that ensure access to healthcare services. ASTHO also supports providing supplementary increases in funding without cutting other public health programs. The federal legislative priorities listed below reflect the most pressing needs of state and territorial health officials.

Tier I

ASTHO will play a lead role in advocacy for:

Sustained, predictable, and increased funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) with an overall 22 percent increase in funding for the agency by 2022 (a new "22 by 22" campaign for public health). Specific cross-cutting programs include:

- The Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) cooperative agreements and the Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP).
- Support for CDC programs funded via the Prevention and Public Health Fund.
- The Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant.

Reauthorize the Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness (PAHPA) program

- Support the creation of a Public Health Emergency Response Fund that does not supplant other public health funding.

Promote access to healthcare as a critical component of the U.S. public health system for states, territories, and tribes. Specifically:

- Support coverage for services including primary care and preventive services, maternal and child health services, and community and social services that address the social determinants of health.

Support federal funding and legislation to address substance abuse and misuse, including the opioid epidemic.

Tier II

ASTHO will actively work with key partners to:

Support funding for ASTHO affiliates' programmatic priorities across HHS with an emphasis on CDC, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) programs that fund state and territorial health agencies.

Support efforts to reauthorize Ryan White and support funding for AIDS Drug Assistance Program and other HIV/AIDS programs.

Support HHS funding and programs to address maternal morbidity and mortality.

Support HHS funding and regulations to ensure a robust environmental health system.

Support funding for the SAMHSA Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant.

Advocate for increased non-defense discretionary funding, relief from sequestration, and the highest funding possible for the 302(b) allocation to the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriation Subcommittee.

Support funding and promulgation of regulations at the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for the implementation of the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act.

Support funding for CDC and FDA food safety and related programs.

Support policies for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to align with other nutritional programs such as WIC to better address the obesity epidemic.

Support funding for the Bureau of the Census to continue to collect data on racial and ethnic minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) populations; health outcomes; and factors influencing the social determinants of health.

Authorize and reauthorize other public health programs as appropriate.

Tier III

ASTHO will monitor and support efforts as time and resources allow to:

Monitor and report on the federal budgets and regulatory reforms for the following:

- Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)
- Housing and Urban Development
- Office of National Drug Control Policy
- Environmental Protection Agency
- HHS Office of Population Affairs

This legislative agenda is meant to guide ASTHO's federal advocacy work. ASTHO staff, with direction and oversight of the board and ASTHO Government Relations Committee, may have to reprioritize, add, or delete agenda items depending on emerging new initiatives, threats, and Congressional activities.