

APHA advocacy priorities for the 119th Congress and the Trump administration

The mission of the American Public Health Association is to build public health capacity and promote effective policy and practice. To realize this mission, APHA will work with members of the 119th Congress and the Trump administration and engage with the federal judiciary to promote and adopt policies that protect and strengthen public health systems and programs for all communities and populations.

Increase and protect funding for vital public health agencies and programs and strengthen the nation's public health infrastructure and workforce. We are deeply concerned with the recent actions by the Trump administration to eliminate important jobs within the Department of Health and Human Services. These cutbacks threaten to jeopardize the public's health and will likely result in greater financial and human costs than any potential savings from indiscriminately reducing the size of the federal workforce at HHS. Instead of targeting the federal public health workforce for cuts, Congress and the administration must prioritize funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Health Resources and Services Administration and strengthen the nation's public health workforce at all levels. These two agencies are the backbone of our federal public health system and provide valuable resources to our nation's state and local health departments, as well as the health professionals who work to keep our nation healthy and address the health inequities that exist in the U.S. APHA strongly urges Congress and the administration to increase investments in these health agencies and programs by working in a bipartisan manner to prioritize public health funding in the FY 2025 and FY 2026 appropriations process.

Uphold and strengthen the Affordable Care Act and further expand access to health coverage and services. Millions of Americans are reaping the benefits of the ACA through expanded coverage, coverage of preventive care, a prohibition on discriminating against people with pre-existing conditions, an extension of dependent coverage for adult children up to age 26 and progress in closing the Medicare prescription drug coverage gap. APHA strongly supported expanding health insurance premium tax credits for millions of individuals in the ACA marketplace. A record 24.2 million individuals now receive affordable, comprehensive health coverage through the ACA marketplace. Support for the Prevention and Public Health Fund, the mandatory fund for public health and prevention activities created by the ACA, is an important component of improving the nation's health and well-being. Through CDC, the fund is providing critical resources to help states keep communities healthy and safe. APHA continues to oppose any effort to repeal or weaken the ACA or the prevention fund, including efforts to redirect funds away from their intended use. APHA is committed to working with Congress and the Trump administration to further expand health insurance for the millions of individuals who still lack coverage and access to critical health services.

Address the health impacts of climate change. Climate change and extreme weather events are threatening our health today, and if left unchecked, will lead to increases in preventable disease and death. Vulnerable populations — such as communities of color, the elderly, young children, people with chronic health conditions and the poor — bear the greatest burden of disease and death related to climate change. Funding provided through the Inflation Reduction Act is helping to speed the transition of our energy and transportation sectors away from fossil fuels and towards clean, safe and renewable energy, and is expected to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by about 40% by 2030. The law includes robust funding for

long-term tax credits and other incentives for clean energy, home energy efficiency, clean transportation, an extension of tax credits for electric vehicles, investments to support clean energy manufacturing and other investments to decarbonize the U.S. economy. Importantly, it will also reduce methane emissions through new fees on methane emissions from the oil and gas sectors and will also provide resources to monitor methane emissions and support underserved communities impacted by methane pollution. APHA opposes any efforts in Congress to rescind these important provisions.

We also encourage Congress to ensure our federal, state and local health departments and agencies have the resources and tools they need to address these challenges by increasing funding CDC's Climate and Health Program and supporting other efforts to address the negative public health impacts of climate change. APHA strongly supports both congressional and agency administrative action to address and combat climate change by cleaning up major sources of pollution in the power, transportation and other sectors.

Protect access to women's health services and reproductive health care. The overturning of *Roe v. Wade* has had a devastating impact on access to reproductive health care in states across the country. In 2024, over 800 bills were introduced in state legislatures to restrict access to abortion, including bills on pre-viability abortion bans, crisis pregnancy center funding and medication-assisted abortion restrictions. Thirty-nine of these provisions were enacted. Thirteen states now completely ban abortion, with seven more imposing strict gestational limits, creating a dire situation where a person's access to reproductive health services is determined by their ZIP code. In addition to abortion bans and gestational limits, some states have also introduced legislation to try to limit other areas of reproductive health care access, including bills that would classify abortion pills as controlled substances, fund anti-abortion crisis pregnancy centers, mandate parental involvement, and criminalize helping someone travel out of state for abortion care.

Evidence tells us that access to safe abortion is a key factor in preventing deaths and disability among pregnant people due to pregnancy-related causes. These state-level attacks that restrict abortion access lead to worse pregnancy-related health outcomes, further health equity gaps by race, ethnicity, income and location, and increase the economic costs associated with exacerbated inequity. APHA urges Congress to pass the [Women's Health Protection Act](#), which would create a statutory right at the federal level for abortion providers to provide abortion care and for patients to receive it, invalidating state-level attacks and protecting the right to bodily autonomy. Additionally, APHA urges Congress to defend against efforts that would weaken access to other forms of reproductive health care access, like contraception access. APHA also urges Congress to strengthen funding in FY 2025 and FY 2026 for programs that support reproductive health services at the community level like the Title X family planning program.

Pass a long-term Farm Bill to protect nutrition security. The Supplemental Nutrition Access Program has a critical role in improving the health of people across the nation, especially among the most vulnerable Americans. SNAP makes a positive difference over the lives of individuals, decreasing negative health outcomes in children and increasing economic self-sufficiency in women. Despite progress, however, hunger continues to affect too many people in the U.S. In 2023, more than 47 million Americans lived in households that struggled with food insecurity, including one in five children. To continue addressing nutrition insecurity and supporting vulnerable families, the Farm Bill must protect and strengthen access to SNAP, strengthen the program's benefit levels, improve equitable access and reduce barriers to eligibility, invest in nutrition research and education, and address nutrition security by improving the food environment to increase equitable access to healthy food. Implementing these measures in the next Farm Bill authorization would not only lift millions of families out of food insecurity but would lower the burden of health care costs for millions of Americans. Rather than passing another extension of the 2018 Farm Bill, it's imperative that Congress work to pass a new Farm Bill this year and avoid any provisions that would weaken the SNAP program or make it less accessible for its participants.

Uphold and strengthen critical public health laws and regulations and reverse damaging rollbacks. APHA opposes any efforts to weaken or roll back important regulations and laws such as the Clean Air

Act that protect the public's health, including legislation that would weaken the process for developing evidence-based public health regulations. These laws and regulations are especially important in our efforts to protect the health of our most vulnerable communities and achieve health equity. APHA strongly supports the new EPA rule to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the power sector, the updated and strengthened Mercury and Air Toxics standards and important new rules to protect the public's health from dangerous particulate matter pollution, other dangerous air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions from both light- and heavy-duty cars and trucks.

Address the nation's gun violence epidemic. In 2023, 46,728 people died from gun violence. APHA has been a leader in advocating for the \$25 million that Congress has provided to CDC and the National Institutes of Health and the \$1 million appropriated to the National Institute of Justice for vital gun violence prevention research. We urge Congress to include \$35 million for CDC, \$25 million for NIH and \$1 million for NIJ in FY 2026. A sound public health approach to address this epidemic begins with understanding the science behind the problem. Research is an essential function to achieve this understanding to make data-backed policy and programmatic decisions, and to employ evidence-based interventions that will save lives. APHA also continues to call on Congress to take up legislation to require universal background checks for all firearm purchases in the U.S. and to pass legislation that allows for the removal of firearms from those deemed potentially harmful to themselves or others through the issuance of extreme risk protection orders.

Support global health activities and ending deadly conflicts abroad. APHA strongly opposes the Trump administration's decimation of the U.S. Agency for International Development. The administration has frozen most U.S. foreign aid, targeted USAID for closure and attempted to fire thousands of USAID employees. USAID plays a key role in extending U.S. assistance to countries recovering from disaster, working to escape poverty and engaging in democratic reforms. The administration has also announced its intent to withdraw from the World Health Organization. WHO is currently working with over 150 nations to combat deadly diseases and monitoring over 100,000 health threats every month. This work has resulted in the global eradication of smallpox, the elimination of polio in 145 countries, and 44 countries and territories being declared malaria-free. This ongoing work is essential to combating new and emerging health threats like fentanyl and bird flu. These drastic actions being taken by the Trump administration to stifle the agency will harm the health of millions.

APHA also supports the ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hamas and urges the administration and Congress to help ensure a long-term and peaceful resolution in the region. We also call on all sides to ensure an immediate and expedited surge of robust and unimpeded humanitarian aid. We look to those directly and indirectly involved, including the U.S. government, to work together to implement this deal and work tirelessly to swiftly address the severe aftermath of this conflict.

For more information on APHA's advocacy priorities, visit <https://www.apha.org/advocacy> or contact Don Hoppert at donald.hoppert@apha.org or Jordan Wolfe at jordan.wolfe@apha.org. Learn more about APHA at www.apha.org.