

# *Iowa Public Health Association*

## **Advocacy Priorities for the 2018 Iowa Legislative Session**



The mission of the Iowa Public Health Association (IPHA) is to be the voice for public health in Iowa through advocacy, membership services and partnerships. Advocacy is an integral part of that three-legged stool and is most frequently identified by our members as a key niche which IPHA occupies on Iowa's public health landscape. IPHA was recognized with the *American Public Health Association 2017 Affiliate Award for Advocacy* (previously awarded to IPHA in 2015 as well).

Recognizing the breadth of issues which IPHA will be called upon to advocate in any legislative session, the IPHA Advocacy Committee will always be ready to respond as nimbly as possible to any public health issue that arises. However, we also recognize a need to identify priorities for the 2018 session in order to allocate resources and proactively engage members, stakeholders and policy makers.

The IPHA Advocacy Committee acknowledges the association's engagement on these issues will shift as bills are introduced. There are many public health issues on which IPHA will be supportive but not the primary driver. IPHA will seek opportunities to advance these issues collectively.

Iowans experience health disparities based upon where they live in our state. **All Iowans should expect the same opportunities to be healthy regardless of where they live, work, learn, worship or play.** To address health equity, IPHA will advocate the following priorities during the 2018 Iowa legislative session.

- **Assure the Adequacy and Capabilities of Iowa's Public Health Workforce**
- **Rethink Iowa's Public Health Funding for a Smarter Return on Investment**
- **Advance Health in All Policies (HiAP) to Increase Efficiency and Decrease Duplication of Governmental Services**

In addition, IPHA will continue to engage to address the issue of Iowa's water quality and the impact on public health.

Complete policy position statements on these and other public health issues are available online at [www.iowapha.org](http://www.iowapha.org).



*"Someone has to be the siren for being vigilant about public health when it is off the front page, and IPHA is the one to do this in Iowa."*

- Dr. Pete Damiano, IPHA Member

## Assure the Adequacy and Capabilities of Iowa's Public Health Workforce

**Identified need:** Existing public health workforce shortages will be exacerbated by: a) a greater demand for public health services to Iowa's increasing aging and more chronically ill population and b) burgeoning retirements of our most experienced public health professionals (estimated at 45-50% of the nation's public health workforce in the next five years). Furthermore, major transformations in the health system (e.g., Affordable Care Act, Medicaid managed care, integrated approaches to prevention and primary care) are changing the skills sets required by Iowa's public health workforce. The gaps in Iowa's public health workforce are not simply a matter of FTEs. The transformation of the public health system is changing the skill sets required of public health professionals.

- **Proposed solution:** Convene a work group to assess Iowa's public health workforce to identify assets and gaps both in the number of public health professionals and the changing skill sets needed in Iowa's public health workforce. Identify strategies that align with Future Ready Iowa and the National Consortium for Public Health Workforce Development. Support implementation of recommended strategies to address identified public health workforce issues.

## Rethink Iowa's Public Health Funding for a Smarter Return on Investment

**Identified need:** Public health departments across Iowa vary in their capacity to carry out foundational capabilities, in part because funding to provide public health services is often variable, unreliable and not sustainable. Some public health services are required in Iowa Code but without an adequate funding mechanism to do so. Even some of the programs which do collect fees fail to cover the actual costs associated with providing the service (e.g., food establishment licensure/inspections). Local tax support for public health services varies across jurisdictions, and state funding also falls short. The foundational public health services (FPHS) version 1.0 is a conceptual framework outlining the capabilities and areas (i.e., programs) that no health department should be without and for which costs can be estimated. The framework also leaves space for additional important programs and activities that are specific to the needs of the community served by the health department.

- **Proposed solution:** Restructure public health funding in Iowa to assure a minimum package of governmental public health services that is predictable, justifiable and scalable to each jurisdiction's population size and capacity. The minimum package of public health services would assure the foundational capabilities of public health: 1) assessment (surveillance, epidemiology and laboratory capacity); 2) preparedness and response; 3) policy development and support; 4) communications and public education; 5) community partnership development and 6) organizational competencies.

## Advance Health in All Policies (HiAP) to Increase Efficiency and Decrease Duplication of Governmental Services

**Identified need:** The health of Iowans contributes to a robust economy and the livability of our state. The *Health in All Policies (HiAP)* approach to decision-making aims to improve the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of legislative actions in balance with the health of Iowans. We must make wise policy and financial investments that value the health of Iowans. Our greatest health challenges and solutions are highly complex and extend beyond the doctor's office. The social, physical, and economic environments in which Iowans live, work, learn and play significantly impact their health. Therefore, improving the health of Iowans requires collaboration with experts in housing, transportation, education, water and air quality, criminal justice and employment.

HiAP identifies how decisions in multiple sectors or policy areas affect health, and how better health can, in turn, support the goals of these sectors. It engages diverse governmental partners and stakeholders to work together to promote health and simultaneously advance other goals such as promoting job creation and economic stability, transportation access and mobility, a strong agricultural system, and educational attainment.

- **Proposed solution:** Convene a work group representing statewide interests comprised of citizens, businesses, public health representatives and other stakeholders to develop a Health in All Policies (HiAP) plan for Iowa. Create a pilot project to implement Health Impact Assessment (HIA) as a tool within the Legislative Services Agency (LSA) to analyze the health impact of proposed legislation similar to the fiscal and legal analysis LSA provides.