



2026 Legislative Action Priorities

Supporting Minnesota's Local Public Health System

LPHA supports continued, stable investment to support local and Tribal public health foundational responsibilities.

Local and Tribal health departments vary greatly in size, resources, and capacity. The Minnesota local and Tribal public health system must be strong, resilient, and connected so that every person, no matter their zip code, race, ethnicity, age or income has access to high-quality public health services. Sustained state funding is essential to ensure every community can maintain core functions such as health-threat assessment and surveillance, data analysis, communications, and community partnership development. Minnesota's local public health system is under pressure from emerging diseases, shifting federal funding priorities, and rising community health concerns such as mental health. Maintaining and growing key funding sources supports the workforce, strengthens prevention, and ensures critical responsibilities like infectious disease control and emergency preparedness continue without interruption. Equally important is a secure, connected data-sharing system that allows local and state partners to exchange timely information, coordinate responses, use limited resources effectively, and protect personal information. Investing in prevention, data infrastructure, and stable funding reduces long-term costs and strengthens systems that keep Minnesotans healthy and safe.

Strengthening Minnesota's Infectious Disease Infrastructure

LPHA supports sustained and flexible state investment in Minnesota's local and Tribal public health infectious disease infrastructure to ensure rapid detection, response, and prevention of emerging and ongoing threats.

Local and Tribal health departments are Minnesota's first line of defense against infectious disease, carrying out mandated responsibilities such as investigating cases, managing outbreaks, coordinating testing and vaccination efforts, and communicating critical information to their communities. Their work prevents localized outbreaks, such as tuberculosis or pertussis, from becoming statewide emergencies and ensures local voices and community partnerships guide response strategies. As vaccination rates decline, communities experience increased vulnerability to preventable diseases, including rising cases of measles, placing additional strain on local capacity. Despite these growing threats, Minnesota provides no dedicated state funding for local infectious disease infrastructure, leaving health departments reliant on unstable federal funding and limited local resources. Unstable funding undermines the ability to sustain a skilled workforce, maintain modern data and surveillance systems, and deliver timely and accessible vaccines. Sustained investment in infectious disease infrastructure at both the state and local levels is critical to prevent localized outbreaks from escalating, ensure vaccines reach communities efficiently, and protect the health of all.

Responding to Public Health Workforce Shortages

LPHA supports policy changes that enable local health departments to fill open positions and retain current employees.

Persistent workforce shortages across the state, limited funding, and competing demands make it difficult for local health departments to recruit and retain qualified professionals. Sustained state investment in workforce development, training, loan forgiveness, and recruitment is essential to ensure every community has the expertise needed to respond quickly and effectively to public health threats. Under Minnesota Statute §145A, each community health board must secure a physician-licensed medical consultant, yet statewide provider shortages make this requirement difficult to meet. LPHA supports HF 2393/SF 3402 to broaden the definition of a medical consultant to include other qualified prescribing providers, strengthening local capacity. LPHA also supports expanding the roles of Community Health Workers and Community Paramedics, to meet community-specific needs.

Addressing Community Health Needs

LPHA supports policy and funding to address ongoing community health needs.

Local public health is mandated to address their community's health needs through an assessment and improvement planning process. This process plays an important role in mitigating social and economic factors that have a direct link to poor health outcomes. Local public health will continue to serve a leading role in preventing challenges before they occur and seeking solutions to ongoing community needs such as food insecurity and healthy eating, access to health services, housing challenges, transportation, violence, higher rates of addiction, and mental health challenges.



LPHA is a voluntary, non-profit organization that works to achieve a strong public health system through leadership and collective advocacy on behalf of Minnesota's county, city and Tribal local public health departments. The Association represents public health directors, supervisors and administrators throughout the state. LPHA is an affiliate of the Association of Minnesota Counties.

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