



BUDGET ISSUES

Foundational Public Health Services Fully fund the basic set of public health capabilities that must be present in every community in order to efficiently and effectively protect all people in Washington state. Public health emergencies, such as food contamination, new viruses and wildfires, are becoming more frequent and more complex. Coupled with budget cuts, this means public health entities across the state lack the resources needed to meet demands for monitoring, preventing and responding to all forms of public health threats.

Youth Marijuana Prevention Account Protect funding stream dedicated to marijuana education and prevention programs and secure maximum allowed appropriation. Under State law, a portion of marijuana revenue is provided to public health for a hotline for referrals to treatment, grants to local health departments for strategies for prevention and reduction of marijuana use by youth, and media-based education campaigns. Competition for marijuana revenues continues and, to date, funding has been insufficient to meet the needs.

POLICY ISSUES

Tobacco/Vaping Regulation Support increasing the minimum age to purchase tobacco and vaping products from 18 to 21. Tobacco use remains a leading cause of preventable death in Washington, contributing to 8,300 deaths annually and costing the state more than \$5 billion a year in healthcare costs and lost productivity. There are more than 104,000 Washington kids alive today who will ultimately die prematurely from smoking. Youth generally access tobacco products from older individuals in their social network, which can include 18-year-old high school seniors. Nearly 90% of smokers begin smoking before the age of 18 and people who do not smoke by the age of 21 generally do not initiate smoking.

Substance Abuse Treatment Support increased drug addiction and overdose prevention efforts and increased access to treatment services. Particular focus on addressing opioid addiction through such means as expanding the prescription monitoring program and access to medication supported treatment.

Rapid Health Information Network Data Support legislation that mandates hospitals with emergency departments to report syndromic surveillance data to Department of Health. The data is used to identify, investigate, and design data-driven, rapid responses to emerging public health threats and provides a comprehensive portrait of chronic disease burden, environmental threats, and injuries that impact the health of Washington citizens. Federal reporting requirements are changing, so state legislation is needed to continue existing mandated reporting.

Commute Trip Reduction Expansion Support efforts to expand commute trip reduction programs to include all drive-alone vehicle trips, not just commute trips. Program expansion will include a new competitive-grant program to invest in better transportation system efficiency for decreasing the number of vehicles on the road by promoting active and shared transportation choices and empowering local jurisdictions and organizations to implement all-trips plans and projects.

Lead Poisoning Protection Support increased efforts to protect Washington residents from lead exposure, through such means as increased inspections of schools. Exposed to lead can occur from a variety of sources (such as paint, gasoline, solder, and consumer products) and through different pathways (such as air, food, water, dust, and soil). Lead exposure can affect nearly every system in the body. Because lead exposure often occurs with no obvious symptoms, it frequently goes unrecognized. No safe blood lead level in children has been identified.

Immunizations Protect the public from communicable diseases by increasing immunization rates, including through restrictions on exemptions to immunization requirements. Vaccine-preventable diseases, such as measles, mumps, and whooping cough, are still a threat. They continue to infect children and adults, resulting in hospitalizations and deaths every year. Outbreaks of preventable diseases occur when many parents decide not to vaccinate their children.

Traffic Safety Address deaths and serious injuries of drivers, cyclists and pedestrians resulting from impaired driving as a result of alcohol, drug and wireless communication devices. One function of public health is to prevent accidents and death. A relatively recent concern has been with the use of wireless communication devices while driving. Wireless communication devices have been shown to create distracted driving. Texting or talking while driving is dangerous, increasing crash risk by a factor of 4 (talking) to 23 (texting). Texting is like driving with a blood alcohol level of 0.19, well over the legal limit of 0.08.

Oral Health Support efforts to increase access to oral health services, with a focus on services for residents of long-term care facilities, including expanding education for dental professionals, exploring new categories of dental providers (including Mid-Level Dental Providers) and increasing insurance coverage. Dental disease is a serious problem and can lead to overall poor health outcomes. It is the most common childhood disease, affecting five times as many children as asthma. Without dental care, many children and adults live in pain, miss school or work, and in extreme cases, face life-threatening emergencies.

Mental Health/Substance Abuse System Reform Support additional efforts to improve the mental health and substance abuse system and availability of care. Mental disorders are strongly related to the occurrence and treatment of many chronic diseases including diabetes, cancer, cardiovascular disease, asthma, and obesity, and to many risk behaviors associated with chronic disease, such as physical inactivity, smoking, excessive drinking, and insufficient sleep. Substance abuse has direct physical effects. These effects are also cumulative to the individual, families and communities, significantly contributing to costly social, physical, mental, and public health problems, including teen pregnancy, domestic violence, child abuse, vehicle crashes and homicide.

Sick and Safe Leave from Employment Support legislation that encourages employers to provide paid leave to employees for specified medical reasons, situations of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking, or closure of the employee's place of business or child's school/daycare due to public health emergencies. Approximately 40% of private sector jobs in the U.S. do not have paid sick leave. The lack of paid sick leave is particularly prominent for in low-wage jobs. Lack of paid sick leave can have adverse impacts on public health, including the spread of infectious diseases.

Educational Opportunities and Learning Environment Support legislation to reduce educational opportunity gaps, increase graduation rates and provide for safe and healthy learning environments. An individual's overall physical and mental health and life expectancy are directly correlated to their income, and research has shown that educational attainment is one of the strongest predictors of income. For most people, educational attainment reflects material and other resources of the family and the knowledge and skills attained by young adulthood. Therefore, education captures both the long-term influence of early life circumstances and the influence of adult circumstances on adult health.

Homeless Youth Assist homeless students and their families through increased supports within and outside of the school environment. Analysis between homeless youth and their housed peers reveals significant differences in physical and mental health outcomes. In addition, youth who are homeless are more likely to suffer from learning disabilities and have lower grade point averages. They are also less likely to graduate from high school, leading to life-long consequences to their health, life expectancy and economic opportunity.