



NCAALHD

North Carolina Association
of Local Health Directors

2020 Legislative Priorities for Public Health

Close the Medicaid coverage gap.

The coverage gap was created by the 2012 Supreme Court ruling which stipulated states could decide whether or not to expand Medicaid. North Carolina did not. The coverage gap includes people who aren't eligible for Medicaid yet their incomes are too low to qualify for Affordable Care Act (ACA) subsidies. For example, adults who earn between \$737 a month and \$1,674 a month for a family of three are in the gap and are currently left out of both Medicaid and ACA subsidies. Closing the gap would cover 500,000 North Carolinians and would protect vulnerable families in need of critical medical care.

Provide additional state funding to address increased demands associated with communicable and emerging infectious diseases.

Local health departments must have the capacity to perform communicable disease control and surveillance activities in order to prevent the spread of disease and protect the public. In the last 10 years, cases of communicable diseases have increased over 200%. State funding to support communicable disease efforts has remained stagnant creating pressures on local governments to meet the demands. In FY 17, general communicable disease control cost over \$20 million and state funding only provided 4.3% of that cost. Provide an additional \$8 million to expand local infrastructure for communicable disease activities which will reduce the spread of disease, protect the public and prevent unnecessary healthcare expenditures.

Restore Women's & Children's Health Block Grant funding to local health departments.

Block grant has provided core capacity to local health departments to provide evidence-based programs for women and children in local communities and helps offset the cost of uninsured care. Since 2011, "carve outs" of the WCH Block Grant have increased from less than 10% of the total to almost 40% in 2017. The redirection of these funds has resulted in a \$2.2 million reduction to local health departments for critical services like maternal health, child health and women's health services. Funding is critical for addressing unfavorable infant mortality rate in North Carolina.

Protect the state's water supply from impact of industrial products and processes

Chemicals and contaminants, both long-known and emerging, have had a decided impact on the quality of drinking water throughout the state. Not only do these matters have a negative effect on drinking water, they also adversely affect the food supply, recreational opportunities and product safety. Heightened timely analysis and scrutiny by state regulators is essential for existing operations. Adequate evaluation of past environment impact on water supply by local and state governmental units is an integral component of the recruitment of industry into the state.