



2022 Legislative Priorities for Local Public Health

North Carolina’s local health departments work to keep our communities safe and healthy. From responding to communicable diseases like COVID-19 to providing safety net healthcare for thousands of North Carolina’s adults and children to ensuring the safety of our environment, local health departments help protect all of us, every day. The North Carolina Association of Local Health Directors represents North Carolina’s front-line leaders in these efforts.

NICALHD leaders have identified policy priorities that are critical to improving and protecting public health in North Carolina. These priorities include:

Provide Healthcare for Uninsured North Carolinians

Adults who earn between \$737 a month and \$1,674 a month for a family of three in North Carolina are ineligible for both Medicaid and subsidies under the Affordable Care Act. Providing Medicaid coverage for these working North Carolinians would give health insurance to 500,000 uninsured North Carolinians and would protect vulnerable families in need of critical medical care.

Secure recurring appropriations to address increased demands on local health departments 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. Provide recurring state funding 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 and Children’s Health Block Grant Funding to Local Health Departments

Federal Women and Children’s block grant funding 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. Unfortunately, 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. Restoration of this funding is critical to improving the health of thousands of North Carolina children and mothers – and to reducing the state’s infant mortality rate.



NCALHD

North Carolina Association
of Local Health Directors

Preserve local public health authority to respond to public health threats

For decades, state law has provided local public health departments with the authority – and responsibility - to respond to imminent hazards such as foodborne illness at a local restaurant or a chemical spill. This authority also allows local public health departments to respond to communicable diseases outbreaks, including COVID-19, among many other diseases. These laws are an essential part of local public health authorities’ ability to respond to immediate public health threats while also protecting the rights of individuals and businesses during a public health emergency. Local public health departments exercise this authority carefully to protect the public's health in a manner that is based on sound science and which allows them to address public health threats quickly and safely. Diluting this authority will limit the ability of local public health leaders to prevent or manage public health crises and imminent hazards. As a result, NCALHD supports the preservation of local public health departments’ authority to respond to imminent hazards and communicable diseases.