



NYSPHA POLICY AND ADVOCACY COMMITTEE

Revised 9/6/2019

Purpose: The New York State Public Health Association (NYSPHA) seeks to support good public health policy that will improve the health of New Yorkers. The purpose of the NYSPHA Policy and Advocacy Committee (PAC) is to prioritize and lead the federal, state, and when appropriate, local advocacy efforts of NYSPHA.

Committee Responsibility:

- To create and post NYSPHA legislative priority list (Legislative Policy Agenda) for the year
- To develop plans to actively support passage of priority legislation
- To mobilize NYSPHA's membership through alerts on legislative issues
- To provide legislative reports to the NYSPHA Board
- Maintain the Policy and Advocacy pages on the NYSPHA website
- Collaborate with other public health organizations, especially the New York State Association of County Health Officials (NYSACHO), and also the American Cancer Society, American Heart Association, American Lung Association and others, to pass priority legislation
- To develop and post memos of support for priority legislation to share with sponsors
- To provide updates to the NYSPHA membership
- To maintain a sub-committee to focus on New York City-specific issues

PAC Roles and Membership:

- Chair – A NYSPHA Board member with an interest and experience in public health policy. There is no set term but would be limited by a person's time on the NYSPHA Board. The Chair is responsible for developing agendas and facilitating the calls or meetings.

- Committee Members – Membership should include members of the Board, general members and the Executive Director. Committee members must be members of NYSPHA. The policy committee should include a wide range of backgrounds and expertise so that the broad experience and focus of the membership is represented and informs NYSPHA’s priorities. Each member is encouraged to focus on a particular priority area, depending on a member’s background and job, and be a liaison to other groups that take the lead in that policy area (e.g., tobacco, access to care, nutrition, cancer screening, HIV). Members may be asked to assist with a particular bill by making a limited number of phone calls to help PAC gather intelligence about a bill and/or participate in legislative office visits if needed.

Time commitment:

Members are encouraged to commit to one complete New York State budgetary and legislative cycle, which runs from September through the end of June. During that time, calls will be held at least every month to stay apprised of Executive and Legislative actions and to plan NYSPHA activities.

Process:

Decision-making is based on Policy and Advocacy Committee discussion.

When a quick decision about supporting specific legislation is needed, the Policy Chair in consultation with the Executive Director or the President can determine the NYSPHA’s support for a bill.

A three-tiered approach will be used to prioritize bills:

1. Top priority legislation that NYSPHA will work to build support at multiple levels in order to promote passage. NYSPHA takes a leadership role.
2. NYSPHA is not a lead organization but is very supportive of the lead organizations efforts. The Association will participate in sign-on letters of support and mobilize our members.
3. NYSPHA is supportive but the bill is a lower priority. The Association will offer our name to support the cause.

Priority bills or proposed legislation should adhere to the following criteria:

- A. It would be expected to have substantial public health impact and population reach in New York State;
- B. It is reasonably feasible for the legislation to be passed within a two to three year time frame;
- C. It is consistent with the Attached Guiding Principles approved by APHA and NYSPHA in 2008.

NYSPHA Guiding Principles November 2008

- 1) We believe *prevention* must drive our nation's health strategy.
 - Prevention means improving the quality of people's lives, sparing individuals from needless suffering, and eliminating *unnecessary costs* from our health system.
 - Fundamental public health actions are proven to help prevent and reduce the rates of illness and disease. A greater emphasis on prevention could significantly reduce rates of chronic illness and corresponding healthcare costs.

- 2) We believe New Yorker's deserve healthy and safe places to live, work, and play.
 - By supporting policies and programs like promoting healthier schools, smoke-free environments, and improved community design, the government can do more to meet its responsibility to help citizens lead healthier lives.
 - The government must protect air, water, and food; minimize chemical exposures; and provide communities with healthier environments.

- 3) We believe New Yorker's deserve to know what government is doing to keep them healthy and safe.
 - The New York State government's role is to ensure that the public health system has sufficient resources and meets basic standards for protecting the public's health. The government must also show that it is spending public health dollars effectively and in ways that clearly improve the public's health and safety.

- 4) Every New Yorker should have the opportunity to be as healthy as he or she can be. Every community should be safe from threats to its health. All individuals and families should have a high level of services that protect, promote, and preserve their health, regardless of who they are or where they live.
 - Preventive services such as educating the public about health risks, early screening for disease, immunizations, and access to healthcare should not be limited to a select portion of the population, but *accessible by all New Yorker's*.

- 5) Current funding levels do not allow the state and local public health system to adequately carry out its role as outlined in the 10 Essential Public Health Services to protect, promote, and preserve health:
 - Monitoring the health of the public
 - Enforcing public health laws
 - Inform, educate, and empower people about health issues (added 9/2019)
 - Diagnosing and investigating health problems in the community
 - Mobilizing community partnerships
 - Linking people to needed health services
 - Developing policies that support individuals and community health efforts
 - Assuring a competent public health and individual healthcare workforce
 - Researching new solutions to today's health problems
 - Evaluating the effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of individual and population based health services