

2019 Strategic Policy Priority Framework

Overview and Purpose

As outlined by the Public Health Accreditation Board standard 5.1, an important role for health departments is “influencing the adoption of effective public health policies and practices by being a resource for science-based public health information. Health departments need to be constantly aware of what issues are being discussed by those who set policies and practices so that they can exert influence.” Utilizing a cohesive strategic policy framework enables Franklin County Public Health (FCPH) to prioritize policy objectives that address social determinants of health and significant public health issues. Advocating for effective public health policies allows FCPH to reduce barriers and advance its goal of equity, in order to improve the overall health of our communities. The following areas are policy priorities which will be advanced at state and local levels. These priorities align with and support the 2018 Community Health Improvement Plan and 2019-2021 FCPH Strategic Plan, were developed by the FCPH Policy Committee, and were adopted by the Franklin County Board of Health in May 2019. They are presented to align with social determinants of health including:



Economic Stability



Education



Food & Nutrition



Housing & Neighborhoods



Social & Community Connections



Transportation

Increase Lead Education & Screening



Exposure to lead is a serious environmental public health threat in Ohio. Lead can damage nearly every system in the human body and has harmful effects on both adults and children.

- Stronger state policy regarding lead screening, testing, and reporting.
- Increase funding for education and community lead abatement programs.
- Increase community partnerships with state and local organizations.
- Link and share data between Medicaid and the State Lead Surveillance System.

Improve Childhood Immunization Rates



Avoid vaccine-preventable deaths and increase “community immunity” through higher vaccination rates.

- Vaccine exclusion policies in Ohio for medical reasons only.
- Increase the presence of community health workers in areas of low vaccination rates.
- Ensure schools are reporting vaccination rates and make the information public.
- Mandate use of Ohio Department of Health’s Vaccination State Registry (Impact SIRS) by all providers.

Decrease Use of Tobacco and Alternative Nicotine Products



Tobacco use is the number one cause of preventable disease and death in the U.S. and Ohio ranks 46th in smoking rates.

- Increase the point-of-sale (POS) age of tobacco and alternative nicotine products from 18 to 21.
- Adopt smoke-free multi-unit housing, community parks, school campuses and open areas.
- Increase funding for evidence-based tobacco prevention and cessation services.
- Adopt licensing, zoning and retailer density policies.
- Increase taxation on all tobacco and alternative nicotine products.
- Increase POS warning signs and restrict tobacco and alternative nicotine product displays.

Reduce the Risk of Unintentional Injuries and Violence

According to the Society for Public Health Education, an injury can pose a direct threat to a person's health in the form of death, disability, and financial burden. Injury prevention, a priority in Healthy People 2020, also remains a key focus for public health and, like all public health priorities, should be addressed in a comprehensive approach to combine policies, environmental change, and health education to prevent injuries. Injuries have identified risk and protective factors making them preventable and, like a disease, follow certain epidemiological patterns which should be studied.

- Youth helmet, child car seat, safety belt and distracted driving ordinances.
- School policies to reduce sports-related injuries including concussion and prescription misuse/abuse.
- Organizational policies to support prevention of suicide, violence, abuse and human trafficking.

Reduce Gun Violence

Safe families and neighborhoods are core measures related to Housing & Neighborhoods as a key social determinant of health for the Franklin County Public Health Community Health Improvement Plan. Unintentional and intentional injuries are foundational public health areas, including violence from firearms. The age-adjusted firearm-related death rate increased 21% from 12.8 to 15.5 per 100,000 people in Franklin County from 2013-2017; and, based on the most recent available data (2017), this rate is higher for Franklin County than the state of Ohio and the nation.

- Public health approach to firearms-related violence and prevention of injuries and deaths.
- Preview recommendations to establish conformity with the Second Amendment.
- Universal background checks for firearm purchases.
- Research firearm injury and death.
- Remove prohibitions to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention firearm research (and others).
- Fund state and non-governmental organization research.
- Support efforts to reduce intimate partner violence, particularly purchasing or possessing firearms.
- Support extreme risk protection orders.
- Promote the safe storage of firearms and the ban of assault weapons.
- Improve access to mental health services.
- Caution against broadly prohibiting everyone with mental health or substance use disorders from purchasing firearms.
- Allow providers to screen and counsel patients on mitigation of firearm injury and lift "gag laws".
- Address firearms designed to increase and extend the killing capacity.

Improve Access and Reimbursement

Patient-centered health coverage plays a key role for vulnerable populations to access needed medical care. There is a correlation between better access to healthcare and educational and overall economic prospects.

- Continue Medicaid expansion to ensure access to primary care, substance abuse treatment and mental health services for vulnerable populations.
- Expand services provided by care coordination agencies utilizing local Public Health Nurses and Community Health Workers.
- Improve reimbursement rates for the Children with Medical Handicaps program.

Increase Environmental Sustainability Efforts

People's health status and community environments are important factors in determining the ability to survive and thrive in the face of climate change. FCPH recognizes the effects of climate change on health equity and supports policies that address comprehensive climate change effects.

- Increase funding for local health department training and response to climate-related weather events.
- Support efforts to reduce waste and human impact through community emission reduction, waste diversion and zero waste initiatives.
- Support state and local laws lessening human impact on climate change or mitigating current efforts.
- Incorporation of sustainable organizational practices and policies.

Improve Revenue Stability

Funding for public health should be expanded to address equity and implement Public Health 3.0. FCPH has identified specific gaps, both programmatically and geographically, in addressing some of the most critical public health priorities. Additional funding is needed for FCPH to meaningfully engage, expand and build on existing initiatives to address core public health services in identified “hot spot” areas by zip code across its jurisdiction.

- Support work to amend/update the current model of funding for foundational public health services.
- Support identification of funding for unfunded mandates (i.e., cost methodology for school inspections, nuisance complaints, rabies control, etc.).
- A standardized, state-wide cost methodology for all health department programs, incorporating direct, indirect, and anticipated costs.
- Allow local solid waste districts to provide funding sources for solid waste enforcement.

Repair and Replace Failing Sewage Treatment Systems

Proper siting, design, installation, monitoring, operation, and maintenance are the critical elements to the success of sewage treatment systems (STS). Failure to follow through with any one of these elements often leads to system failures, polluted waterways, nuisance conditions, expensive repairs/replacements or costly sanitary sewer extensions.

- Sustainable funding for the replacement and/or repairs of failing STS and the replacement of water supply lines from the curb to the faucet.
- Support efforts by sanitary engineers to connect STS to sanitary sewers.
- Support policies and procedures that directly affect the siting, design, installation, monitoring, operation, and maintenance of STS.

Reduce Sugary Drink Consumption in Children and Adolescents

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Heart Association, excess consumption of added sugars, especially from sugary drinks, contributes to the high prevalence of childhood and adolescent obesity, and increases the risk for dental decay, cardiovascular disease, hypertension, type 2 diabetes, and all-cause mortality.

- Policies that raise the price of sugary drinks, accompanied by an education campaign on the risks of sugary drinks. Tax revenues should be allocated to reducing health and socioeconomic disparities.
- The federal and state governments should support efforts to decrease sugary drink marketing to children and ensure access to healthful foods and beverages.
- Children, adolescents, and their families should have ready access to credible nutrition information, including on the nutrition facts panel, restaurant menus, and advertisements.
- Policies that make healthful beverages the default choice should be widely adopted and followed.