

Health In All Policies

Your Weekly Source for Public Health Legislative Updates In New Hampshire



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Policies

Health in all

Start of Session Edition

The NHPHA Policy Committee employed the same framework as last year to determine priorities for the 2019 state legislative session. Criteria utilized to establish the priorities included: high impact public health issues as supported by available data, priorities from the previous year, partner priorities, priorities of the American Public Health Association, and alignment with our policy statements and mission, vision and values. Our advocacy priority areas are:

- Equity & Health Outcomes
- Healthy Environments - Natural, Built and Social
- Substance Misuse - Improving Prevention, Treatment, & Recovery

The format of our *Health In All Policies* newsletters will start with a call to action of what NHPHA has prioritized for the week to come, then highlight bills and legislative activity in the above priority advocacy areas. We will also provide information on other bills and legislative activity with public health impact.

NHPHA remains committed to educating decision makers and others on the public health impact of all proposals being debated in our state legislature. And NHPHA remains committed to keeping our members and partners abreast of these topics as they are being debated at the NH Statehouse. See below to learn more how we define our priority advocacy areas for the 2019 Legislative Session:

Equity & Health Outcomes

NHPHA believes that all people who live in New Hampshire should have a fair and just opportunity to be healthier. This requires remedying obstacles to health such as poverty, discrimination, and their consequences, including perceived powerlessness and lack of access to good jobs with fair pay, quality education and housing,

safe environments, and health care. Inequity in these areas results in health and wellness disparities, including a substantial burden of avoidable illness.

2019 Prioritized bills for NHPHA action in this area are focused on:

- a state minimum wage ([HB 186](#)),
- family medical leave ([SB 1](#)),
- improving capacity for effective non-academic surveys in schools ([SB 196](#)), and
- bills seeking to increase access to the NH Granite Advantage Health Care Program.
- Affordable housing will be addressed as capacity allows.

Healthy Environments - Natural, Built and Social

NHPHA believes in the importance of addressing the environments in which we live, learn, work, and play to ensure a healthy population. Environmental risk factors in the air, water, soil, and our food system caused by pollution, chemical exposures, occupational and built environment hazards, natural disasters, and climate change contribute to diseases and injuries, including the top two leading causes of death in New Hampshire, cancer and heart disease. Emerging and ongoing issues of environmental health in New Hampshire include drinking water contamination, mercury in our lakes and waterways, lead exposure due to the age of our housing stock, to name a few. Other issues of importance include the indoor and outdoor air quality, and features of the built environment that influence behaviors, physical activity patterns, social networks and access to resources.

2019 Prioritized bills for NHPHA action in this area seek to impact:

- tobacco sale and use including vaping ([HB 511](#), [HB 680](#), [HB 230](#), and [HB 438](#)), and
- gun violence prevention ([HB 109](#), [HB 687](#), [HB 514](#), [HB 564](#) and [HB 101](#) (opposing this last one).
- Bills related to clean water and concern for the impact of climate change on health are two additional areas we will address based upon capacity.

Substance Misuse - Improving Prevention, Treatment, & Recovery

NHPHA believes the high rate of Opioid Use Disorders, a chronic remitting and relapsing medical disease that is preventable and treatable, is the number one public health crisis facing the State of New Hampshire in 2018. NH has the third highest rate of drug overdose deaths in the country. According to the NH Governor's Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention, Treatment and Recovery State Fiscal Year 2017 Annual Report, "Significant challenges in service and system capacity still negatively impact

the accessibility of an effective system of care for substance use disorders. These challenges are rooted in stigma, and the residual impact of the historical under-resourcing of services, systems, and state agencies, as well as the pressure of increased demand for services coupled with shortages in key domains of the workforce." In order to tackle this issue that is crippling the vitality of New Hampshire communities, our state needs to continue to work to improve prevention, early identification, treatment, recovery support, law enforcement and interdiction.

2019 prioritized bills for NHPHA action in this area address:

- Medicaid provider rates for behavioral health ([SB 5](#)),
- supports for the behavioral health workforce ([LSR 895](#)), and
- removing restrictions on use of federal funds for syringe services programs ([SB 87](#)).



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