

2023 Federal Legislative Agenda

The Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) supports strengthening and preserving all programs that are effective to advancing the public's health and well-being. ASTHO supports addressing the social determinants of health and preserving current federal investments for all of these efforts, including programs that ensure access to healthcare services. ASTHO also supports providing supplementary increases in funding without cutting other public health programs. The federal legislative priorities listed below reflect state and territorial health officials' most pressing needs.

Tier One

ASTHO will play a lead advocacy role for:

Increased funding for governmental public health agencies through annual appropriations bills. Specific cross-cutting programs include:

- CDC Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) cooperative agreements.
- CDC Social Determinants of Health.
- CDC Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant.
- CDC Public Health Infrastructure.
- CDC Data Modernization.
- ASPR Hospital Preparedness Program.

Supporting federal policies, programs, and funding for public health data sharing, modernization efforts, and data governance.

Supporting legislation to develop a long-term solution to Medicaid financing for the U.S. territories.

Supporting the renewal of the Compacts of Free Association for the Freely Associated States (FAS).

Promoting access to healthcare as a critical component of the U.S. public health system for states and territories. Specific focus areas will include lowering healthcare costs, improving insurance coverage, and increasing the use of telehealth.

Supporting reauthorization of the Pandemic and All Hazards Preparedness Act (PAHPA).

Tier Two

ASTHO will actively work with key partners to:

Support funding for ASTHO affiliates' programmatic priorities across HHS with an emphasis on CDC, HRSA, and SAMHSA programs that fund state and territorial health agencies.

Support programs, policies, and funding to address HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C.

Support federal funding for research related to preventing firearm injury and death.

Support funding and programs to combat healthcare-associated infections and antimicrobial resistance, including promoting antibiotic stewardship and sepsis awareness, prevention, and treatment.

Support public health programs funded via the Prevention and Public Health Fund.

Support funding and policies to improve overall vaccination rates throughout the country.

Support HHS funding and programs to address maternal morbidity and mortality.

Support HHS funding and regulations to ensure a robust environmental health system, which includes mitigating and preparing for extreme weather events.

Support funding for CDC and FDA food safety and related programs.

Support funding and legislation to address substance abuse and misuse, including the opioid epidemic.

Support funding, legislation, and promulgation of regulations to support comprehensive tobacco control programs, including for e-cigarettes.

Support policies and funding to address obesity, including increasing physical activity and access to healthy foods.

Authorize and reauthorize other public health programs as appropriate.

Tier Three

ASTHO will monitor and support efforts as time and resources allow in the following areas:

- Modernization of the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children.
- Reproductive health services.
- Research and policies to address long COVID-19.
- Healthy aging initiatives.

This legislative agenda is meant to guide ASTHO's federal advocacy work. ASTHO staff, with direction and oversight of the board of directors, may have to reprioritize, add, or delete agenda items depending on emerging new initiatives and Congressional activities.