



## WISCONSIN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION

### WISCONSIN ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS & BOARDS



#### ABOUT WPHA AND WALHDAB:

The **Wisconsin Public Health Association** is the largest statewide association of public health professionals in Wisconsin. Established in 1948, WPHA exists to improve, promote and protect health in Wisconsin. WPHA strives to be diverse in its constituency, rich in partnerships and valued for its policy recommendations and best practices. WPHA is the collective voice for public health in Wisconsin.

The **Wisconsin Association of Local Health Departments and Boards** is the state-wide organization of board of health members and health department administrators providing a unified forum for public health leadership development, advocacy, education, and forging of community partnerships for the improvement of public health at the local level.

The mutual goals of WPHA and WALHDAB, which represent over 1,100 public health professionals statewide, are to:

1. **Advance public health policy**
2. **Build public support and awareness for population health issues**
3. **Strengthen public health practice and increase public health capacity**



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

#### ABOUT PUBLIC HEALTH

Public health is the science and art of protecting and improving the health of communities through education, promotion of healthy lifestyles and research for disease and injury prevention. Public health prevents health problems before they occur. Public Health professionals come from varying educational backgrounds and specialize in a number of different fields, including medicine, research, administration, education environmental science and social work to protect the health of the public.

Over the past 100 years, achievements in public health have increased life expectancy, reduced child and infant mortality, and eliminated or reduced many communicable diseases. All together, public health improves our quality of life, increases workforce productivity and reduces health care costs.

The Centers for Disease Control list of the ten greatest public health achievements of the 20th century illustrate the remarkable contributions public health has made to society:

These achievements alone can be credited with increasing life expectancy by at least twenty five years

- **Vaccination**
- **Control of infectious diseases**
- **Improved birth outcomes**
- **Safe food & water supply**
- **Tobacco cessation**
- **Decline in heart disease & stroke**
- **Fluoridation of drinking water**
- **Motor-vehicle safety**
- **Safer workplaces**
- **Family planning**

since 1900. This is remarkable compared to the four additional years of life expectancy gained over the same period of time from medical advancements.



# WPHA / WALHDAB

## PUBLIC HEALTH POLICY AGENDA



Although the benefits of public health are apparent in the everyday lives of Wisconsin citizens, public health remains a diverse and dynamic issue that is not easily summarized. To remain focused on Wisconsin's top public health priorities, WALHDAB and WPHA strongly support the following public health policies:

1. Strengthen investment in public health services
2. Promote public health prevention & wellness
3. Eliminate health disparities
4. Build a stronger public health workforce

### 1. Strengthen investment in critical public health services

Wisconsin's public health system is severely under funded. Wisconsin ranks 49th in the nation in public health funding per capita, which has led to a significant reduction in the overall health of our citizens over the last decade. With the struggling economy resulting in a greater reliance on public health services, we believe it is critical to have the necessary resources available to effectively fund vital public health programs.

#### Key Priorities:

- Repeal the 2009-11 budget proposal to cut tobacco control funding by \$1.8 million.
- Preserve current public health funding levels in the 2009-11 state budget.
- Explore creative revenue streams to increase investment in vital public health programs.

### 2. Promote public health prevention & wellness

Prevention and wellness are the foundation of public health. Properly implemented and fully funded prevention initiatives reduce death, disease and disability, and are the most cost-effective means of improving the overall health of all Wisconsin citizens. In fact, according to a recent study, an investment of \$10 per person, per year in prevention will save Wisconsin taxpayers \$337 million annually within five years.

#### Key Priorities:

- Support the statewide smoke-free law to prevent death & disease caused by second-hand smoke.
- Champion the 2009-11 budget proposal to increase the cigarette tax by 75-cents per pack.
- Increase support for school health services.

### 3. Eliminate Health Disparities

Individuals with low social and economic status generally live in less healthy social and physical environments, have substandard access to health care and have a shorter life expectancy. We believe everyone – regardless of gender, heritage, race or ability to pay – has a right to full access to quality health information and services.

#### Key Priorities:

- Develop the Milwaukee Center for Health Equity into a statewide center for health equity.
- Expand, statewide, evidence-based home visiting programs to improve poor birth outcomes.

### 4. Build a stronger public health workforce

A sufficient, competent and diverse public health workforce is the base of a strong public health system. Wisconsin's public health workforce is aging at a higher rate than the rest of the state's workforce, and the number of professionals considering careers in public health has not grown to meet future demand.

#### Key Priorities:

- Support state funding for the building of a School of Public Health at UW-Milwaukee.
- Support the Public Health Workforce Development Leadership Consortium.

