



Mission: To improve public health in Maryland through education and advocacy
Vision: Healthy Marylanders living in Healthy Communities

Maryland Public Health Association's 2017 Legislative Priorities

At the annual meeting of the Maryland Public Health Association (MdPHA) in October 2016, we polled our members about what matters most to them in policymaking. The theme of the meeting, “Behavioral, Lifestyle, and Social Determinants of Health” yielded a robust discussion about public health policy improving health outcomes and quality of life for all Marylanders. Our legislative priorities this year reflect the polling results and the sentiments expressed by our membership.

Health Equity:

The American Public Health Association (APHA) has named health equity a [guiding priority](#) and [core value](#). MdPHA will prioritize policies that address health equity, which ensures everyone has the opportunity to attain their highest level of health. Healthy People 2020, the nation’s health objectives for the current decade, defines health equity as the “attainment of the highest level of health for all people. Achieving health equity requires valuing everyone equally with focused and ongoing societal efforts to address avoidable inequalities, historical and contemporary injustices, and the elimination of health and health care disparities.”

Priority Bills in 2017:

Earned sick leave

- All workers deserve paid sick days so that no one faces the impossible choice of providing for their family or taking care of their health or their family’s health.

Prescription Drug Price Affordability

- The skyrocketing costs of prescription drugs contributes significantly to an already burdened health care system. We must take address these costs to ensure that these life-saving medicines are available to all Marylanders.

Keep the Door Open Act

- Marylanders affected by mental health and substance use disorders must have high quality and accessible services to meet their needs.

Ban on Hydraulic Fracturing (“Fracking”)

- Fracking and related activities in neighboring states are associated with increases in asthma attacks, adverse birth outcomes, and other illnesses; we have an opportunity this session to prevent harm from this industry in Maryland.

Looking Forward: Gun Violence is a Public Health Issue

Gun violence has emerged as a priority among our membership. As APHA states, “The issue of gun violence is complex and deeply rooted in our culture, which is why we must take a public health approach to ensuring our families and communities are safe. We must place a renewed emphasis on improving gun injury and violence research.” We will spend this year building new partnerships and strengthening existing relationships with groups working prevent gun violence in Maryland.

The Maryland Public Health Association is the state affiliate of the American Public Health Association, a 142-year-old professional organization with more than 50,000 members. MdPHA has more than 180 members throughout the state, including our state and local health departments. We organize strong, active networks for the public’s health, and we advocate for sound policies in Annapolis.