

Developing Advocacy Capacity to Advance Innovative Public Health Policies

This session discusses findings from two key reports that can help inform stronger advocacy for public health policies.

- ***The State of State-level Public Health Advocacy: Findings and Implications from a 50-state Scan*** assesses the advocacy capacity for public health across the U.S.
- ***Innovative Laws and Policies for a Post-Pandemic Public Health System*** examines laws and policies being enacted across the U.S. in several key areas that may serve as model best practices.

This session will:

Provide you with ideas to **improve advocacy capacity on behalf of public health.**

Help you think creatively about **how to turn great law and policy ideas into reality** in your jurisdictions.

Speakers

Leslie Zellers

Consultant - Fighting for the Public's Health Initiative
Network for Public Health Law

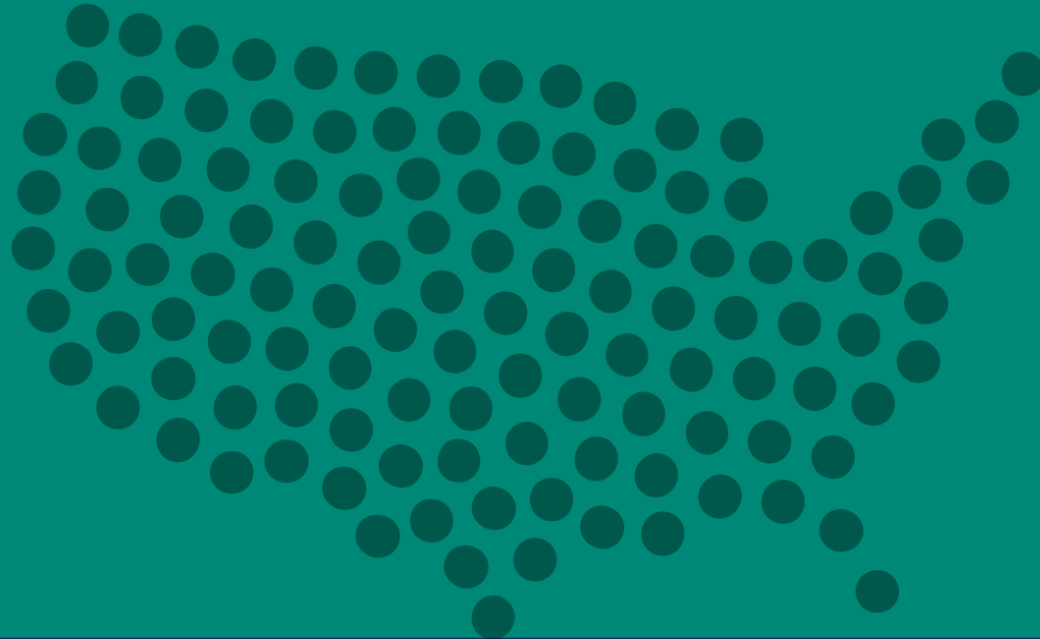
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Managing Director
Network for Public Health Law

The State of State-Level Public Health Advocacy



Based on a 50-state Analysis Conducted by:

- Leslie Zellers, JD
- Quang ("Q") Dang, JD
- Manel Kappagoda, JD, MPH
- Emma Waugh, MPH



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de Beaumont



Let's Hear from You!



Why and How

Why

“This is worth the investment. Public health is at a tipping point because of COVID and the policy and cultural moment.

It’s an important time to invest in public health advocacy. Otherwise, we run the risk of health and wellness deteriorating if public health isn’t the voice.”

Fighting for Public Health:

Findings, Opportunities, and Next Steps from a Feasibility Study to Strengthen Public Health Advocacy



Prepared for **The Network for Public Health Law**

by **Frey Evaluation, LLC:**

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September 2022

How We Did It

- Key informants in all 50 states and DC
- March – June 2023
- Examples:
 - State and local health department representatives
 - elected officials
 - lobbyists
 - partners in other sectors and organizations



Definition of Advocacy



“The term ‘**advocacy**’ encompasses a broad range of activities—including research, public education, lobbying, and voter education—that can **influence public policy.**”

—Bolder Advocacy

Findings

“Good advocacy is like water on a rock, patiently drip, drip, dripping until the rock yields ...”

1 The role and value of public health is often misunderstood

2 Public health is often reluctant to rely on lobbying and advocacy

3 Challenges to PH authority make advocacy more difficult and essential

4 Health equity is fundamental and requires nuanced communication

5 Many public health allies remain untapped resources

6 The public health workforce is underfunded.

Finding #1

Public health has the **expertise and tools** to help all communities achieve health and well-being, but the **role and value of public health are often hidden and/or misunderstood.**



Quotes

“If given the right arguments, Republicans would support [residents of this (red) state].”

“Public health bills have to be workforce bills, not public health bills.”

Finding #2

Members of the public health workforce and state/local public health leaders are often **reluctant to rely on tools such as advocacy and lobbying that have served other sectors well.**



Quotes

“The public health workforce underestimates and undervalues how much it can actually advocate.”

“The [public health] organizations are the subject matter specialists, but the paid lobbyists have the relationships, make the calls, and get things through.”

“We [public health] care about how policy looks and affects people; lobbyists care about winning. Both are important.”

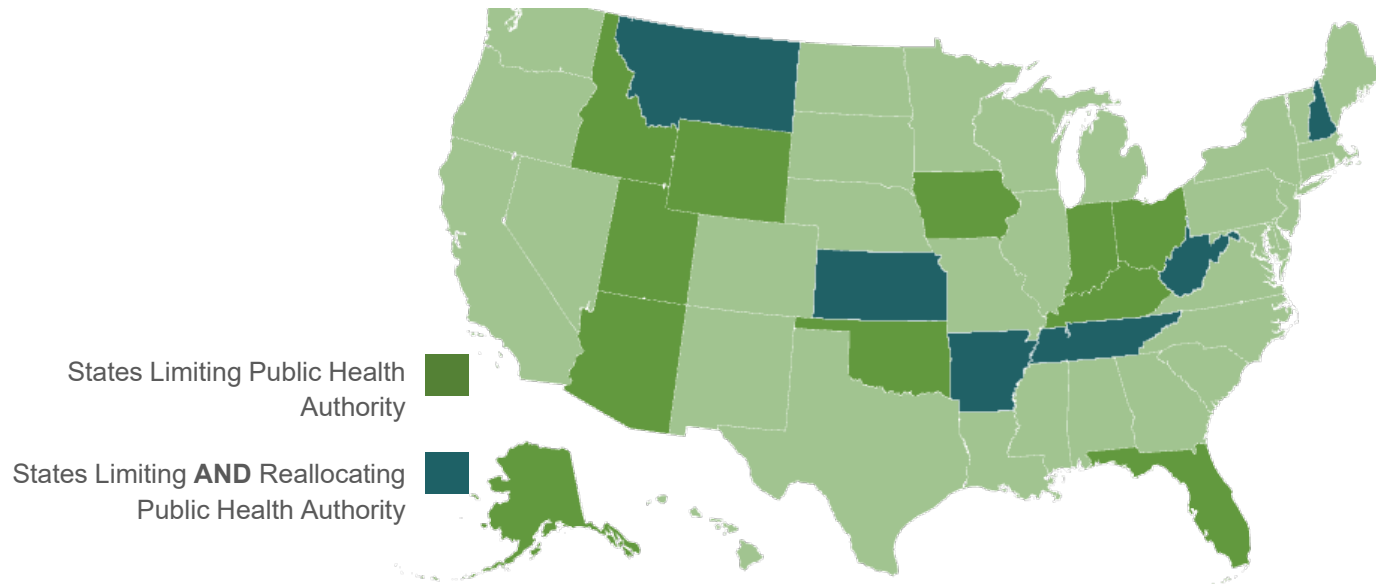
Finding #3

Public health measures in response to COVID have sparked ongoing **challenges to public health authority**, making advocacy even more difficult and essential.

Act for Public Health

An initiative of the Public Health Law Partnership

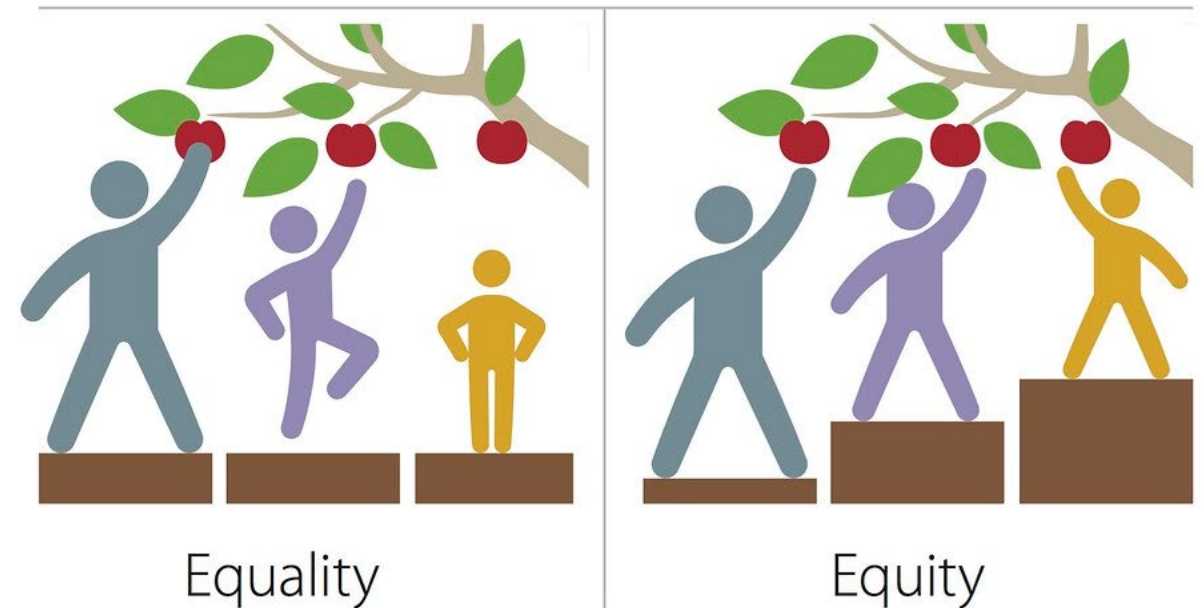




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Finding #4

Health equity is fundamental to public health and requires nuanced communication in some states/regions.



Quotes

“While it is hard to deny the facts around racial disparities, the challenge is to figure out a way to discuss health equity without making it immediately toxic.”

“[We’re a] long way off from talking about health equity. In most communities, [we’re] still just introducing the concept ... Community Health Centers in the state and the fight for Medicaid expansion all overlap with healthy equity, but ... Buzzwords and splashy DEI terms are not used.

Finding #5

Many public health allies at the local and state levels remain **untapped resources** for protecting and promoting the public's health, including supporting public health advocacy and lobbying efforts.



Examples

*Some states want support for coordinating resources
Others want new organizations, e.g. a 501(c)(4)*

Purpose:

- Share advocacy models and lessons learned*
- Respond more nimbly*
- Nurture coalitions*

Finding #6

The **public health workforce** stepped up to protect all of us during COVID, despite not being at full strength going into the pandemic and being severely tested during the pandemic. COVID-related funding infusions are helpful but not sufficient unless sustained.



Examples

Among state health officers, only four pre-COVID leaders remained in place across all 50 states.

Opportunities to Respond

Findings & Opportunities

PH's role and value is often
misunderstood

PH is often reluctant to rely on
lobbying and advocacy

Challenges to PH authority make advocacy
more difficult and essential

Health equity is fundamental and
requires nuanced communication

Public health allies remain untapped
resources

The PH workforce is underfunded

1

Elevate public health's value proposition

2

Encourage strategic advocacy and lobbying

3

Counter challenges to public health authority

4

Fight for health equity

5

Tap the strengths of supportive allies

6

Support the public health workforce

Opportunities to Respond



1

Elevate public health's value proposition:

- Create consistent messages to highlight public health's contributions;
- Customize public health messages to local/state contexts
- Address misinformation;
- Affinity group for advocates in red states



2

Encourage the strategic deployment of advocacy and lobbying on behalf of the public's health:

- Build capacity and motivation to deploy a full range of advocacy tools
- Include advocacy skills in core competencies, curricula, and professional development
- Bolster/expand lobbying capacity

Opportunities to Respond



3

Counter challenges to public health authority

- Understand scope of challenges, share success stories
- Enlist allies to counter challenges
- Track legislative and litigation attacks on public health



4

Fight for health equity, with or without the language of health equity:

- Share multiple ways to express concept of health equity
- Develop/test how to make a strong case for health equity in different political environments
- Share successful examples

Opportunities to Respond



5

Tap the strengths, capabilities, and shared interests of supportive allies

- Strengthen ties to allies with ability to lobby on shared goals, including in other areas such as voting rights, climate justice, etc.
- Support collaboration among existing organizations
- Fund new advocacy and lobbying organizations where needed



6

Support the public health workforce:

- Document and advocate for what “full strength” public health would look like
- Rebuild public health infrastructure with sustained investments
- Funders: supplement government funding

Findings & Opportunities

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| PH's role and value is often misunderstood | 1 | Elevate public health's value proposition |
| PH is often reluctant to rely on lobbying and advocacy | 2 | Encourage strategic advocacy and lobbying |
| Challenges to PH authority make advocacy more difficult and essential | 3 | Counter challenges to public health authority |
| Health equity is fundamental and requires nuanced communication | 4 | Fight for health equity |
| Public health allies remain untapped resources | 5 | Tap the strengths of supportive allies |
| The PH workforce is underfunded | 6 | Support the public health workforce |



What's Next?

- Report available: <https://www.networkforphl.org/news-insights/the-state-of-state-level-public-health-advocacy/>
- Network webinar: scan findings and convening
- Solicit funding, get started!
- Send us your feedback!

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Thanks to:

52 key informants

Project advisors:

- Martha Katz
- Madeleine Frey
- Gene Matthews
- Dawn Hunter

THANK YOU

Innovative Laws and Policies for a Post-Pandemic Public Health System

Network team
Jill Krueger, JD
Donna Levin, JD
Darlene Huang Briggs, JD, MPH
And many more!

Act for Public Health partners

Innovative Laws and Policies for
a Post-Pandemic Public Health
System

June, 2023





ACT for Public Health

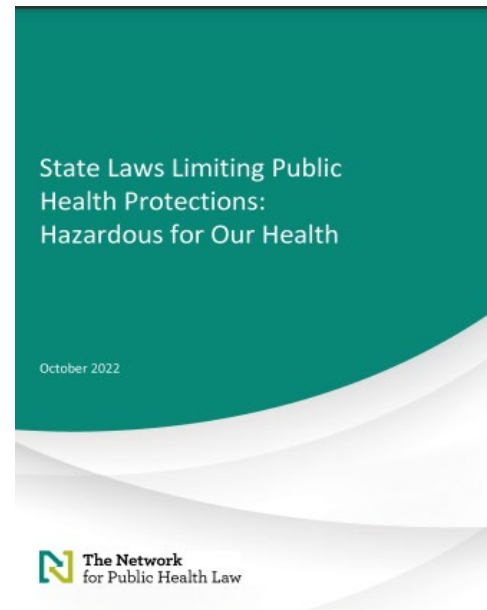
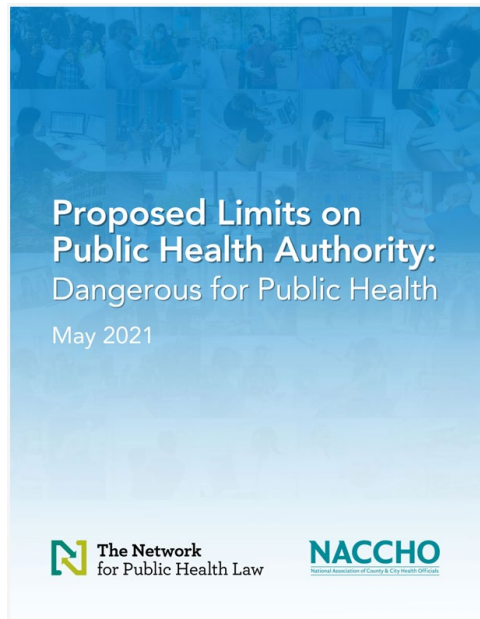


**Health law partners addressing challenges to
public health authority and infrastructure.**



Perhaps more than at any other time in its history, public health is being directly and significantly impacted by how laws and policies are being implemented—or weakened.

Coordinated backlash



Themes

- Prohibitions on public health interventions
- Shifts in authority
- Limitations on public health orders
- Elevation of individual freedoms over the common good

Working toward a coordinated response

APHA
Trust for America's Health
Local Solutions Support Center

ASTHO
NEHA

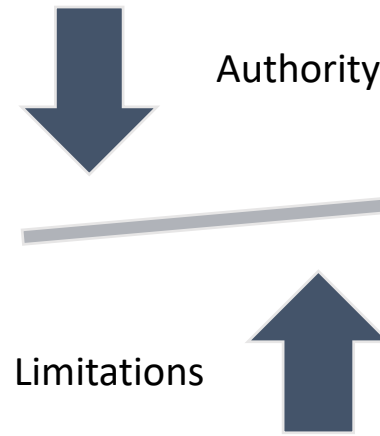
Act for Public Health
Bipartisan Policy Center

NNPHI NALBOH
NACCHO

Uniform Law Commission

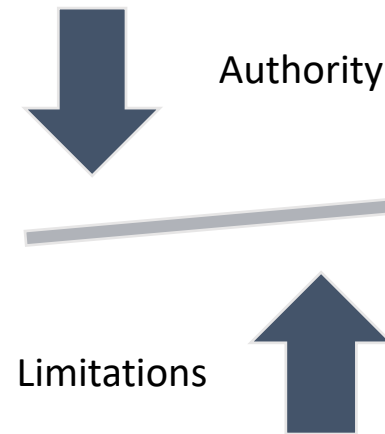
CDC Foundation
American Heart Association

WordItOut



Values and Goals

- Evidence-informed action
- Good governance
- Equity and fairness



Public Health Interventions and Emergency Orders

- [Vermont S.1 \(2021 Special Session\)](#) and North Dakota HB1323 (2021) – Local control for mask measures
- [Illinois SB 1169 \(2021\)](#) – Amended the state’s Health Care Right of Conscience Act to make clear employers do not violate the law for imposing or enforcing requirements intended to prevent the contraction or transmission of COVID-19
- [Increased access to prevention and treatment measures](#)
- [Social and economic supports](#)
- [Minnesota HF 367/SF 610 \(introduced 2023\)](#) – would narrow the school-based non-medical vaccine exemption, making it inapplicable to childcare providers and allowing childcare providers to adopt policies prohibiting enrollment of non-immunized children
- [Uniform Law Commission’s Model Public Health Emergency Authority Act](#) (released October 2023)
- [Forthcoming Prevention Measures Law Assessment Tool](#) – updated for use by health officials at all levels alongside cross-sector partners to assess sufficiency of legal authority to implement communicable disease prevention measures

Health Equity

- [Respect for Tribal law and sovereignty](#)
- [Connecticut SB 1 \(2021\)](#) – declared racism a continuing public health crisis until at least a 70% reduction in racial disparities across indicators of education, health care utilization and outcomes, criminal justice, and economic justice
- [Milwaukee County, WI Ordinance Nos. 20-4 \(2019\), 20-9 \(2020\), and 22-5 \(2022\)](#) – codified the county’s commitment to achieving racial health equity, including numerous accountability measures such as requiring departmental budget requests demonstrating alignment with the strategic plan and annual progress reports from all county departments
- [COVID health equity task forces](#) – Massachusetts’ community-driven guiding principles and Utah’s cross-sector Multicultural Advisory Committee
- Apply learnings from the [Racial Equity Interests and Needs Assessment](#) conducted by the Network among users of Network services (released September 2023)

Infrastructure and Workforce

- **Modernization of public health labs and data** – significant federal funds for lab construction, modernization, and increased capacity as well as data modernization
- **Laws facilitating health information exchange (HIE) and implementation of a health data utility (HDU) model**
- **Disaggregation of data**
- **Strategic state stockpiles**
- **Hazard/hero pay**
- **Workforce capacity, recruitment, and retention** – significant federal funds
- **California AB 2697 (2022)** – codified community health worker (CHW) services as a covered Medicaid benefit, required managed care plans to promote the benefit, and ensured ongoing CHW engagement
- **Building legal capacity**

Governance and Funding

- [Indiana Governor's Public Health Commission \(Executive Order 21-21\), SB 4 \(2023\), and HB 1001 \(2023\)](#) – identified and enacted legislative changes to update public health governance, infrastructure, services, and funding
- [Washington HB 1497 \(2019\)](#) – Foundational public health services
- [Oregon Public Health Modernization \(2021-2023\)](#) – substantial funding for community-based organizations to better reach key constituencies
- [Equitable engagement compensation programs](#)
- [Colorado SB 21-256 \(2021\) and HB 19-1210 \(2019\)](#) – preemption repeal of firearms regulation and minimum wage requirements
- [Navigating changed legal environments](#)
- [Racial equity impact assessments](#)

Key Opportunities

- Laws and policies should be updated to address changing conditions and increase fairness and equity.
- Laws and policies should align with community priorities and be developed through cross-sector collaboration.
- Adequate long-term funding should be provided to support the health system.



Image Credit: [AzoraArashi Flickr](#)

Your Turn!



Q&A

If you liked this session, you'll also like

- Act for Public Health: Legislation and Litigation Impacting Public Health Authority – Opportunities and Challenges | Wednesday, 9:15 – 10:30 AM
- Closing Breakfast Plenary Session: Strengthening Protections and Advocating for the Public's Health | Thursday, 8 – 9:30 AM
- Working with Communities to Build a Robust, Equitable and Resilient Public Health System: Lessons from the Field | Thursday, 9:45 – 11 AM

Thank you!

We welcome not only your participation in these sessions but your insights, ideas, and commitments to working with us to advocate for laws and policies that are equitable and fair AND protect and promote the health of our communities.

Please remember to complete the session evaluation.