



APHA 2026 advocacy priorities for the 119th Congress and the Trump administration

The mission of the American Public Health Association is to build public health capacity and promote effective policy and practice. APHA will work with members of the 119th Congress and the Trump administration to realize this mission by engaging with the federal judiciary to promote and adopt policies that protect and strengthen public health systems and programs for all communities and populations.

Increase and protect funding for vital public health agencies and programs and strengthen the nation's public health infrastructure and workforce. We continue to oppose efforts by the Trump administration to eliminate important jobs and funding within the Department of Health and Human Services. These cutbacks jeopardize public health, and indiscriminately reducing the size of the federal workforce at HHS will likely result in greater financial and human costs than any potential savings.

Instead of targeting the federal public health workforce and budgets for cuts, Congress and the administration must prioritize funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Health Resources and Services Administration and strengthen the nation's public health workforce at all levels. These two agencies are the backbone of our federal public health system and provide valuable resources to our nation's state and local health departments, as well as the health professionals who work to keep people healthy and address the health inequities that exist in America. APHA is pleased that Congress worked in a bipartisan manner to reject the administration's calls for deep cuts and nonsensical reorganizations of HHS agencies in 2026 and will continue to urge Congress and the administration to increase investments in these health agencies and programs and to continue to work in a bipartisan manner to prioritize public health funding in the FY 2027 appropriations process.

Uphold and strengthen the Affordable Care Act and the Medicaid program and further expand access to health coverage and services. Millions of Americans are reaping the benefits of the ACA through expanded coverage, coverage of preventive care, a prohibition on discriminating against people with pre-existing conditions and an extension of dependent coverage for adult children up to age 26. APHA strongly supported expanding health insurance premium tax credits for millions of individuals in the ACA marketplace. Last year, a record 24.2 million individuals received affordable, comprehensive health coverage through the ACA marketplace. Unfortunately, Congress allowed the ACA's enhanced premium tax credits to expire in 2025. As a result, premiums increased for many consumers, which is expected to reduce ACA insurance coverage and increase the number of uninsured Americans. Congress must work in a bipartisan manner to extend the tax credits as soon as possible.

We also urge continued support for an important component of improving the nation's health and well-being — the Prevention and Public Health Fund, a mandatory fund for public health and prevention activities created under the ACA. Through CDC, the fund is providing critical resources to help states keep communities healthy and safe. APHA continues to oppose any effort to repeal or weaken the ACA or the prevention fund, including efforts to redirect funds away from their intended use. APHA is committed to working with Congress and the Trump administration to further expand health insurance for the millions of individuals who still lack coverage and access to essential health services.

Tackle the health impacts of climate change. Climate change and extreme weather events are threatening our health today, and if left unchecked, they will lead to further increases in preventable disease and death. Vulnerable populations — such as communities of color, low-income communities, the elderly, pregnant people, young children and people with chronic health conditions — bear the greatest burden of disease and death related to climate change.

We encourage Congress to ensure our federal, state and local health departments and agencies have the resources and tools they need to address these challenges by increasing funding for CDC’s Climate and Health Program and supporting other efforts to address the negative public health impacts of climate change. APHA strongly supports both congressional and agency administrative action to address and combat climate change by cleaning up major sources of pollution in the power and transportation sectors, among others. Additionally, APHA will work to oppose ongoing efforts in the Trump administration to roll back important regulations targeting the largest sources of greenhouse gas emissions and other air pollution, including from the power and transportation sectors.

Protect access to women’s health services and reproductive health care. The overturning of *Roe v. Wade* has had a devastating impact on access to reproductive health care in states across the country. In 2024, over 800 bills were introduced in state legislatures to restrict access to abortion, including bills on pre-viability abortion bans, crisis pregnancy center funding and medication-assisted abortion restrictions. Thirty-nine of these provisions were enacted. Thirteen states now completely ban abortion, with 28 additional states imposing strict gestational limits, creating a dire situation where access to reproductive health services is determined by a person’s ZIP code. In addition to abortion bans and gestational limits, some states have also introduced legislation to try to limit other areas of reproductive health care access, including bills that would classify abortion pills as controlled substances, fund anti-abortion crisis pregnancy centers, mandate parental involvement, and criminalize helping someone travel out of state for an abortion.

Evidence tells us that access to safe abortion is a key factor in preventing deaths and disability among pregnant people due to pregnancy-related causes. These state-level attacks that restrict abortion access lead to poorer pregnancy-related health outcomes, further health equity gaps by race, ethnicity, income and location, and increase the economic costs associated with exacerbated inequity. APHA urges Congress to pass the Women’s Health Protection Act, which would create a statutory right at the federal level for abortion providers to provide abortion services and for patients to receive it, invalidating state-level attacks and protecting the right to bodily autonomy.

Another barrier to accessing reproductive health services is an attempt by the Trump administration to cut funding from the Title X family planning program. Title X served nearly 2.8 million people in 2023, providing services that help increase access to contraception, limit transmission of sexually transmitted infections and increase early detection of breast and cervical cancer. Unfortunately, in March 2025, HHS illegally withheld \$65.8 million in Congressionally-appropriated funding for the Title X program from 16 grantees with grants in 23 states, threatening essential health care access for an estimated 842,000 people, or 30% of all Title X patients. APHA urges Congress to provide strong funding for Title X and other essential reproductive health programs in the FY 27 appropriations process and defend against any attempts by the administration to slash or hold funding from these programs that communities depend on for critical health services.

Uphold and strengthen critical public health laws and regulations and reverse damaging rollbacks. APHA opposes any efforts to weaken or roll back important regulations and laws such as the Clean Air Act that protect the public’s health, including legislation that would weaken the process for developing evidence-based public health regulations. These laws and regulations are especially important in our efforts to protect the health of our most vulnerable communities and achieve health equity. APHA strongly supports the Environmental Protection Agency’s rule to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the power sector, the updated and strengthened Mercury and Air Toxics standards and important new rules to protect the public’s health from dangerous particulate matter pollution and other air pollution and

greenhouse gas emissions from both light- and heavy-duty cars and trucks. APHA will fight against attempts to repeal or weaken these important rules.

Address the nation’s gun violence epidemic. In 2024, the most recent year for which we have provisional data, firearm-related injuries led to an estimated 44,492 total fatalities, with suicides contributing to more than half of those deaths. Thanks to past funding provided by Congress, since 2020, CDC and NIH have made dozens of awards for two- and three-year projects in states all across the country to improve scientific understanding of firearm-related morbidity and mortality and to rigorously evaluate the effectiveness of death and injury prevention strategies, as well as determinants of firearm injury, the identification of those at risk, and the evaluation of innovative public health interventions. To further advance our research into the causes of this ongoing epidemic, we urge Congress to include \$35 million for CDC, \$25 million for the National Institutes of Health, and \$1 million for the National Institute of Justice in FY 2027 continue and expand public health research into firearm morbidity and mortality prevention. A sound public health approach to address this epidemic begins with understanding the science behind the problem. APHA also continues to call on Congress to take up legislation to require universal background checks for all firearm purchases in the U.S. and to pass legislation that allows for the removal of firearms from those deemed potentially harmful to themselves or others through the issuance of extreme risk protection orders.

Advocate for the humane treatment of all immigrants, including in detention facilities, and support access to needed health services, safe living conditions and nutritious food.

Regardless of immigration status, all individuals deserve to be treated humanely and fairly by any U.S. law enforcement agency at all levels of government. Unfortunately, we have seen several instances over the past year where individuals have needlessly lost their lives or had their rights violated in the name of immigration enforcement.

One meaningful way to protect communities is to codify guidance on immigration enforcement near so-called “sensitive locations.” This commonsense, historically bipartisan and widely-supported policy would limit immigration enforcement in sensitive locations like schools, child care facilities, health care and public health facilities, and places of worship, among other critical locations for individual and community well-being. Congress can incorporate the protections included in the Protecting Sensitive Locations Act (H.R.1061/ S.455) into DHS spending legislation. It is not the only solution that must be included to protect our communities, but an important one that will help promote stability and safety.

We also urge Congress to conduct oversight into questionable enforcement tactics by members of U.S. immigration enforcement agencies and the conditions and treatment of immigrants at all U.S. detention centers.

For more information on APHA’s advocacy priorities, visit <https://www.apha.org/advocacy> or contact Don Hoppert at donald.hoppert@apha.org or Jordan Wolfe at jordan.wolfe@apha.org. Learn more about APHA at www.apha.org.