



# New York State Association of County Health Officials 2019-20 Budget and Legislative Asks

NYSACHO's mission is to support, advocate for, and empower the 58 local health departments (LHDs) in their work to prevent disease, disability and injury and promote health and wellness throughout New York State. LHDs are your partners and operational extensions, working in the forefront of communities, addressing public health issues and serving as the first line of defense against all public health crises. The first priority of New York LHDs is to maintain the core public health services they have been tasked to provide. These services address family health, communicable disease, chronic disease, emergency preparedness and response, community health assessments and in full service counties, environmental health. Additionally, LHDs must respond to emerging public health threats such as the flu epidemic, opioid abuse epidemic, drinking water contaminants, increasing rates of sexually transmitted diseases, tick-borne viruses and beyond.

**Local health departments have reached a tipping point.** To adequately maintain core public health services and address emerging threats, we respectfully request:

1. **Opposition to, and Restoration** of the proposed cut to State Aid Reimbursement for NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene which would reduce the percent of reimbursement above the base grant from 36% to 20%. This will result in a nearly \$60 million revenue loss to essential public health programs. A cut of this magnitude will have a direct impact on the health and wellbeing of all New Yorkers.
2. **Allocation** of resources to Article 6 base grants to ensure public health services are eligible for full reimbursement of local expenditures:
  - a. From \$650,000 to \$750,000 in full services LHDs and \$500,000 to \$550,000 in partial service LHDs and in per capita reimbursement amount from 0.65¢ to \$1.30.
3. **Consideration** of a slow and cautious approach to legalization of an adult-use marijuana program with the interest of public health and mental health at the forefront of decision making by:
  - a. Ensuring local health departments receive flexible funding to expand workforce capacity. Protecting public health must be the first major pillar of a regulated marijuana program and must be funded sufficiently to ensure harm reduction.
  - b. Guaranteeing local health departments, through NYSACHO, have a seat at the table as regulations and policies are developed.
4. **Support for, and Reinforcement** of the Executive's proposal to adopt Tobacco 21 policy statewide and all components of the tobacco control package which will protect millions of New Yorkers from exposure to dangerous tobacco products.
5. **Recognition that Unfunded Public Health Policy Results in Poor Policy.** Local health departments are committed to supporting and carrying out strong public health policy, but the success of new or expanded policies can only be achieved with investments in, either Article 6 state aid, or within flexible grant programs to allow for effective implementation at the local level. Public health responses require public health resources!
  - a. **Early Intervention:** NYSACHO supports the proposed 5% rate increase for targeted service providers. Though it remains to be proven whether or not this rate increase will improve provider capacity, we believe this increase may prevent further erosion of existing capacity. Furthermore, the proposed budget does not yet account for this rate increase in cost to localities.
  - b. **Lead Poisoning Prevention:** NYSACHO conceptually supports primary lead poisoning prevention activities, including those such as the Governor's Lead Safe Housing policy. However, to adopt such a policy without providing the funding local health departments will need for effective implementation would doom the policy to certain failure.

**Thank you** for the opportunity to present our needs and ideas for collaboration to your legislative committees. We look forward to continuing our work with both the Legislative and Executive branches to serve the essential public health needs of the people of New York State. **Please refer to NYSACHO's formal submitted testimony which contains the specific information and funding levels we believe necessary to enable you to craft and properly resource effective public health policy.**