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**NEW YORK STATE ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY HEALTH  
OFFICIALS (NYSACHO): 2019 LEGISLATIVE SESSION  
YIELDS NUMEROUS PROTECTIONS FOR PUBLIC HEALTH**

**Dozens of Organizations Rally Together to Notch Wins on Adult-Use Cannabis, Tobacco  
21, Vaccinations, Elevated Blood Lead Levels**

**State Leaders Demonstrate Courage in Protecting New York's Communities; Future  
Funding is Key to Success**

(Albany, New York. June 21, 2019) The State's 2019 Legislative session concluded today, securing numerous victories for public health that were made possible by the vision and leadership of courageous State leaders, and a broad partnership of stakeholders bound together through their commitment to protecting the health and wellbeing of all New Yorkers.

NYSACHO applauds four key public health elements of the 2019 session: defeating a proposal for an adult-use regulated cannabis program; raising the legal age for purchasing tobacco and vaping products to 21; reducing the actionable elevated blood level (EBLL) of children and; ending non-medical exemptions for childhood vaccinations.

"NYSACHO is thrilled and humbled by the unity and leadership demonstrated during this legislative session," said NYSACHO President Daniel J. Stapleton, MBA, who also serves as the Niagara County Public Health Director. "There is strength in numbers, and dozens of like-minded organizations rallied together on key public health initiatives. We feel that our collective voices were heard. The State Legislature demonstrated tremendous courage in protecting the people of New York."

NYSACHO recognizes and thanks the numerous state officials who demonstrated leadership throughout the 2019 session, including: Governor Cuomo, who signed the vaccination exemption and blood lead level measures into law, and has committed to signing the Tobacco 21 legislation into law; Senator Gustavo Rivera and Assemblymember Richard Gottfried for driving numerous public health policies through the legislative health committees and serving as champions for lowering the actionable EBLL; Senator Brad Hoylman, Assemblymember Jeffrey Dinowitz and Senator David Carlucci, who bravely countered misinformation by sponsoring the vaccination exemption legislation; Senator Diane Savino and Assemblywoman Linda Rosenthal, who sponsored the Tobacco 21 legislation; and numerous members of the Senate and Assembly who held ground in opposition of an adult-use regulated cannabis policy, recognizing the need for a slow, cautious approach with public health and safety at the forefront of this conversation.

“These victories demonstrate the power of unity, courage and science-based fact,” Stapleton said. “We proved we can work together to achieve great things. We look forward to continuing our work with the Executive and State Legislature to ensure sound public health policies, including sufficient funding for new and existing policies.

#### About NYSACHO

*NYSACHO represents all 58 county health departments, and supports, advocates for, and empowers local health departments in their work to promote health and wellness and prevent disease, disability and injury throughout New York State.*

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### **Additional Information on Key Public Health Provisions**

#### **Lowered Blood Lead Level (enacted in the 2019-20 Executive Budget)**

The Executive Budget lowered the actionable elevated blood lead level in children from 10 micrograms of lead per deciliter of blood ( $\mu\text{g}/\text{dl}$ ) to 5  $\mu\text{g}/\text{dl}$ . This measure will result in a six fold increase in the number of children requiring public health interventions which will translate into a six fold increase in workload for local health departments. The state’s investment of \$9.4 million for local health department services leaves approximately \$36.6 million, or 80% of the full implementation costs to be paid by local governments. It is important to consider effective public health policy to be one that is funded fully to ensure thorough implementation. We look forward to working with State leaders ahead of the 2020-21 Budget to secure the funding needed to ensure that we are successful together in implementing this policy and protecting our children.

#### **Vaccination Exemptions (Chapter 35 of the laws of 2019)**

This law eliminates all non-medical exemptions to approved childhood vaccinations, including the Measles-Mumps-Rubella (MMR) vaccination. Passage of this law was timed well as New York State continues to work toward a resolution to the growing outbreak of measles caused by a high number of non-medical exemptions in schools.

#### **Tobacco 21**

Passed by both houses of the Legislature, County Health Officials eagerly await the Governor’s signature on this important bill, raising the legal age of purchasing tobacco and vaping products to 21.

#### **Adult-use Regulated Cannabis Program**

The initiative was defeated due, in large part, to concerns raised by organizations representing public health, law enforcement, medicine, parents and various other perspectives.

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