Streamlining Minnesota’s Food Safety System

**LPHA supports streamlining Minnesota’s food safety system.**

- Oversight of Minnesota’s retail food system is split between the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) and the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA), which results in a confusing maze for food establishments when interacting with the system.
- Ensuring food is safe for consumers and preventing foodborne illness is a fundamental public health responsibility.
- LPHA supports consolidating retail food protection activities under MDH and supports maintaining the authority over food supply and distribution, manufacturing and farming with MDA.
- These changes will eliminate redundancy and streamline costs, improve the consistency of application of food regulations, and make it easier for local business to interact with the system.

Preventing Youth Tobacco & Nicotine Addiction

**LPHA supports limiting youth access to tobacco by increasing the tobacco age to 21 and restricting flavored tobacco.**

- The popularity of e-cigarettes is booming, with one in four MN 11th graders reporting that they vaped within the last 30 days in the 2019 Minnesota Student Survey.
- Nearly all adult smokers start smoking before the age of 21, and many kids turn to older friends and classmates as a source of tobacco products.
- With the recent passage and enactment of tobacco 21 at the federal level, state action is still necessary to protect Minnesota’s young people. LPHA supports a state-level tobacco 21 policy to align state law with federal law, and remove penalties on young people who purchase, possess or use tobacco.
- Menthol, candy and fruit-flavored tobacco products are attractive to kids and can lead to a lifetime of tobacco addiction and disease. Flavors are used to mask the harshness of tobacco and other chemicals but are just as addictive and harmful as unflavored products.

Investing in Local Public Health

**LPHA supports a significant, statewide increase in funding for local public health.**

- The Local Public Health Grant is the state’s main investment in core prevention services mandated through statute (MN Stat. § 145A). This funding accounts for just 6% of revenue, resulting in an over-reliance on local tax levies and unstable grant funding, compromising our capacity to respond to current and emerging health threats.
- LPHA supports funding to direct more dollars to health improvement, mental health, TB response, public health nuisance, and emerging health threats.
- LPHA supports maintaining stable prevention funding for the Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP) to help Minnesotans live healthier, longer lives and continue to drive down state health care costs.

Enhancing Services for Children with Asthma

**LPHA supports changes to Medical Assistance to allow for coverage of in-home visits for children with asthma, coverage of products that reduce asthma triggers, and referral to follow-up educational services.**

- LPHA supports Medical Assistance coverage for home visits by a registered environmental health specialist or risk assessor to identify asthma triggers, delivery and instruction on use of durable low-cost medical equipment.
- More than 7% of Minnesota kids have asthma and 25% of those kids have asthma that is poorly controlled.
- Health education, combined with in-home inspections and allergen reducing products reduced asthma symptom days by 21 per year, reduced missed school days by seven per year, and reduced acute health care visits to the ER, Urgent Care and unscheduled office visits.

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**About the Local Public Health Association of Minnesota**

The Local Public Health Association of Minnesota (LPHA) is a voluntary, non-profit organization that works to achieve a strong local public health system through leadership and collective advocacy on behalf of Minnesota’s county, city and tribal local public health departments. The Association represents more than 230 public health directors, supervisors and community health services administrators throughout the state. LPHA is an affiliate of the Association of Minnesota Counties.