



**Public Health Association of New York City
2017 Public Policy Agenda**

PHANYC's Principal Goal:
Strengthening Communities' Health through Global Health with Justice

PHANYC supports a “population health equity” approach to policy development and implementation that places a primary emphasis on ensuring the fair and equitable distribution of resources to all peoples in diverse communities, especially vulnerable populations and subgroups in resource-poor neighborhoods, and on improving health outcomes. PHANYC is committed to the elimination of health disparities and urges the promotion of health equity in all areas of our work, including health promotion, disease prevention, access to medical and dental care, and throughout our education, judiciary and labor systems for a diversity of populations disproportionately affected by poorer health outcomes and increased exposure to morbidity and mortality.

THREE MAJOR AREAS OF EMPHASIS FOR PHANYC:

1. Reproductive, Maternal, Neonatal, Child and Adolescent Health
2. Health Promotion and Disease Prevention
3. Emergency Preparedness

REPRODUCTIVE, MATERNAL, NEONATAL, CHILD, AND ADOLESCENT HEALTH:

- a. To Safeguard Reproductive Health and Ensure Women's Equality and Freedom from Discrimination and Violence, PHANYC Urges:***
- The expansion of the 2015 New York Women's Equality Act to include a provision ensuring women access abortions within 24 weeks of pregnancy, or when necessary to protect her life or health.
 - An urgent focus on access to reproductive health and freedom from discrimination and violence, including the expansion of statewide funding to track rape kits in a database, test, and submit an annual report of kits processed and the protections to all students from discrimination statewide through the New York State's Human Rights law.
 - Protections to secure contraception for prevention from STDs and unintended pregnancy without any cost-sharing requirements or other restrictions or delays with respect to this coverage by insurers. Update New York Mandates for infertility to require private insurers in NYS to provide patients with not only diagnostic and treatment for infertility but also offer in vitro-fertilization services without a 12-month waiting period and expand mandate to include patients on individual insurance plans.

- Appropriate, comprehensive health education for youth, families and adults in all communities. Integration of nutrition, physical and sexual health education into core curriculum for education programming for all students of all school ages and abilities.
 - Enable women to have equal access to obtain abortions regardless of a person’s income, where they live, or how they are insured including Medicaid.
 - Explicit inclusion policies banning transgender exclusions in both private insurers and Medicaid in all 58 states.
- b. *To Ensure Work-Life Balance with Family Leave Insurance and Fairness for Pregnant Workers, PHANYC Supports:***
- Modernization of New York State’s Temporary Disability Insurance system by adding partial wage replacement for up to 12 weeks of parental leave and leave needed to care for a seriously ill family member, as well as raising benefits to an adequate level for today.
 - Protections for families related to abusive work scheduling which includes restrictions against ‘clopening’ – workplace standards requiring late hour closings and early morning openings without consideration for sleep. Advanced notice of work schedules with enough time to appropriately arrange child care and other responsibilities will be a priority.
- c. *To Invest in Maternal/Child Health, PHANYC Supports:***
- The APHA Breastfeeding call to action and the DOHMH “Latch On NYC” Initiative to promote breastfeeding among new mothers, recognizing efforts to increase breastfeeding rates and narrow breastfeeding disparities as fundamental public health issues, as well as the implementation of the NYS Breastfeeding Mother Bill of Rights.
 - Implementation of reforms to ensure reasonable break time for nursing mothers to express breast milk as well as the coverage of costs to rent or purchase breastfeeding equipment.
- d. *To Invest in Youth in Foster Care, PHANYC supports:***
- Public health approaches to strengthening the child welfare and foster care systems and improving health and well-being for all children and youth including developing parent feedback in the Child Welfare and Foster Care Systems, and renewing commitment to health of youth in or transitioning out of foster care.

HEALTH PROMOTION AND DISEASE PREVENTION:

- a. *To Advance Obesity Prevention through Nutrition, Oral Health, and Physical Activity, PHANYC Supports:***
- Policies to educate the consumer regarding dietary guidelines and encourage healthier food and beverage options.
 - Continuation and expansion of the NYS Healthy Food Healthy Communities Fund to help address limited access to healthy foods in underserved regions of the State. Efforts to improve access and affordability to healthy foods in the five boroughs of New York City will be a priority.

- Establishment of nutritional standards for restaurant meals for those food and beverage items targeted at children.
- Instruction on the importance of maintaining good oral health for proper consumption and access to oral health care.
- Provision of the same level of respect and consideration for physical education as for other areas of school curricula, thereby promoting consistent and quality PE.
- Enforcement and expansion of existing NY State Education Department regulations for required minutes of physical education in schools to meet national guidelines.
- Implementation of other physical activity programs within school and community settings, provided that they do not replace required PE minutes.
- Provision of a safe environment, free from threat of harm or pollutants, as an integral part of promoting greater physical activity. Build an environment that affords accessible outdoor and indoor recreational space. Continue the implementation of the “Vision Zero” initiative for street safety.
- Motivate age-appropriate and comprehensive health education for youth, adolescents, and adults.

b. To Prioritize Tobacco Control Initiatives, PHANYC Supports:

- Increased funding for all tobacco control programs in an effort to promote adult cessation and reduce youth initiation.
- Increased cost for tobacco and establishment of tax parity on other tobacco / nicotine products.
- Restriction of the sale and allowable use of tobacco and nicotine products, including limits on e-cigarettes and hookah, among others.
- Requirements to post residential smoking policies.
- Expansion of Medicaid coverage for cessation therapies.
- Reduction of accessibility to nicotine

c. To Promote a Coordinated Approach to Mental Health and Drug Policy, PHANYC Endorses:

- A public health approach to drug policy that integrates prevention, treatment, harm reduction and public safety in a coordinated framework for improving health and safety outcomes for all communities.
- Recognition and prioritization of addiction as a disease.
- The APHA resolution for a public health response to drug use (addressing opioid policy among other aspects).
- **State legislation to decriminalize low levels of marijuana possession.**
- The expansion of access to clean syringes.
- Expansion of overdose prevention programs including education about the benefits of naloxone.
- High-quality, cost-effective services for individuals who have mental health needs, including recovery-oriented care, care management, and a collaborative team-based approach.
- Support of appropriate funding to improve access to mental health care.
- Ongoing review and discussion of provisions mandating reporting by mental health practitioners to ensure adequate education and training to inform implementation and safeguard the rights of individuals with mental illness and mental health service needs.

- Prioritization of policies that support expansion of suicide prevention programs.
- Appropriate gun control policies that balance strategies to reduce risk to communities through regulation and adequate funding and provision of mental health services to protect the privacy, safety, well-being, and dignity of individuals with mental health needs.
- Encourage the enforcement of mental health parity laws
- Support Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services' proposed regulation to apply the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act (MHPAEA) to Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program
- Advocate for the expansion of NYC Police Department Crisis Intervention Team program and training
- Advocate for the expansion of crisis intervention training programs for school staff
- Advocate for the expansion of school-based health and mental health services for children

d. To Support a Public Health Approach to Criminal Justice, PHANYC Calls for:

- The integration of a public health approach in the criminal justice system, including evidence-based reforms that incorporate but are not limited to more stringent standards for solitary confinement.
- Policies that facilitate a healthy reentry for people rejoining the community post-incarceration such as reduced restrictions for housing and employment.
- Linkages to healthcare and health insurance.
- Expanded use of alternatives to arrest and incarceration interventions.

e. To Improving Equitable Access to Pain Management, Palliative Care and Health Care Decisions Counseling and Support, PHANYC Encourages:

- Policies that promote equitable access to pain management, palliative care and counseling about health care decision options including medical marijuana.
- Education for all practitioners in pain management and palliative care.
- Improved conditions for payment regarding pain management and palliative care.
- Amendments to the NY Family Health Care Decisions Act to address gaps in law and to increase services and supports to family caregivers.
- A sharpened focus on the central role of palliative care in planning for and responding to public health emergencies.

f. To Promote Healthy Aging and a Coordinated Approach to Issues Affecting Older Americans, PHANYC Strongly Supports:

- Policies to enhance healthy food service programs, nutrition education, behavioral health information, and chronic disease self-management education programs.
- Education for patients and providers regarding strategies to prevent falls.
- HIV/AIDS education.
- Oral health promotion.
- Advocacy for prevention and management of Alzheimer's Disease and other forms of dementia and for their integration into public health prevention initiatives.

- The reauthorization of the Older Americans Act (OAA) as a pivotal mechanism to support the well-being of older individuals by providing services and programs designed to help them live independently in their homes and communities.

g. *To Ensuring the right to health and health care for all, PHANYC Supports:*

- Implementation of a single payer health plan or Medicare-for-all initiative.
- A Basic Health Program in NYS to add an affordable coverage option for people under 200% of poverty.
- Enactment of an out of network coverage bill.
- Efforts to enroll underserved populations in health insurance
- Efforts to remove discriminatory exclusion of coverage for transgender-related care in our Medicaid program.
- Recognition of dental care as an essential service.

h. *To Improve the health of all populations, PHANYC commits itself to collaborative engagement with partners across all sectors to:*

- Improve the community health work force.
- Create and maintain an environment that provides clean air and water.
- Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.
- Limit the chemicals in the products we use.
- Encourage community safety to prevent violence.
- Homelessness and those in the process of becoming homeless.
- Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS:

a. *To Promote Community Resilience, Public Health Emergency and Disaster Preparedness, PHANYC Supports:*

- The whole community resilience initiative of the US Departments of Health and Human Services and Homeland Security, and the recommendations of the Office of the Public Advocate of New York City in its 2013 Report, *Supporting Community-Based Disaster Response*, which are consistent with an approach to integrating CBOs and community stakeholders into disaster planning.
- The recommendations of the New York City Bar Association in its 2013 report, *Policy Recommendations for New York City's Next Mayor*, with respect to addressing disaster planning for mental health needs as well as vulnerable older and disabled residents in the community, nursing facilities and adult homes.
- Facilitation of household preparedness and deployment of appropriate and timely critical emergency supplies such as prescription medications with resources for adequate storage, potable water, and food that complies with nutritional needs of the population.

For more information, please contact the PHANYC Policy Committee, policyinfo@phanyc.org