

For Your Consideration



Since March 2020, local public health departments have been more visible than ever before due to their efforts to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. However, control of communicable diseases is only one of the many vital services offered by local public health departments in Michigan and across the U.S. In many cases, public health staff have been redirected from their normal duties to support emergency operations and COVID-19 vaccination, contact tracing and case investigation efforts.

One-time COVID-19 recovery funds have been very helpful and appreciated during this intense time of responding to the public health emergency. However, local public health has been chronically and severely underfunded in Michigan for decades. Critical infrastructure has been neglected and staffing levels have been inadequate. The Public Health Advisory Commission Report (2019) indicates the state is currently funding only approximately 30% of essential cost-shared services and is not in compliance with the 50/50 cost share as provided in PA 368 of 1978. The report also contains several recommendations to strengthen and support the local public health system in the state.

MALPH respectfully requests your consideration of the following:

SUPPORT the authorization of **American Rescue Plan Act** funds, as quickly as possible, so that necessary supplies and infrastructure projects can be procured and completed before these funds expire in 2024.

OPPOSE efforts to curtail the **authority of local health officers**. PA 368 of 1978 established the authority of local health officers to issue emergency orders in times of public health emergencies. Over the past four decades, these powers have been used judiciously and sparingly. Restricting these orders to 28 days, unless voted on by a state or local governing body, will bring serious consequences in the event of future public health threats.

SUPPORT additional local public health funding to close the gap in the 50/50 cost share for **Essential Local Public Health Services**. These funds support services such as protecting private and public groundwater supplies, minimizing the risk of foodborne illnesses at licensed food service establishments, on-site sewage disposal management, hearing and vision screening, immunizations, and infectious disease control.

SUPPORT the recommendations of the **Public Health Advisory Council** including continuing and expanding collaboration locally and between state departments, investing in Michigan's public health system, specifically that of local public health departments as "boots on the ground" stakeholders, to study issues, problems, and programs to make recommendations from a perspective of health (Health in All Policies).