



Legislative Session

2021 Public Health Priorities

Funding Priorities



Coronavirus

Since having the first confirmed case in the nation, the Health District has significantly scaled up its staffing and response to protect our communities in alignment with Washington's Safe Start Plan. Had it not been for emergency state and CARES Act funding, the Health District would not have had the capacity to maintain this sustained and complex response. Those dollars have funded more than 60 temporary staff to do contact tracing, testing, and communications. The Health District is currently spending \$700,000 or more per month in this response. However, the emergency funding is set to expire in December 2020. Loss of these positions and funding will severely diminish capacity to continue responding at the same level. *The Snohomish Health District supports federal and state efforts to fund a sustained coronavirus response including community testing, contact tracing, epidemiology, vaccine distribution, and communications; a rigorous evaluation and compliance of phase 3 trials prior to approving a COVID-19 vaccine; and the authorization of emergency medical service providers to augment local health's coronavirus response.*



Foundational Public Health Services

Increase funding to fully implement the set of public health capabilities that were adopted in HB 1497 (2019), as well as public health infrastructure investments at the federal level. COVID-19 has shown, and exacerbated, the current systems deficits. This continues a phased approach to fully funding core public health services and infrastructure. *The Snohomish Health District supports federal and state efforts toward fully funding FPHS.*

Policy Priorities



Adult Mortality Review

Like the Child Death Review and Prevention system authorized by RCW 70.05.170, adult mortality review teams would seek to gather data and identify preventable circumstances in adult deaths and consider systems, policies or environmental changes to reduce and prevent deaths. Initial focus can emphasize deaths of despair and disparate impacts, including suicide and substance abuse. *The Snohomish Health District supports the development, implementation and funding of an adult death review and prevention system.*



Vapor Products

Vapor products have been linked to hundreds of vaping-related illnesses across the nation, including a number of cases in Snohomish County. Though the sale of tobacco and vapor products has increased to 21 years of age, the use of flavors that appeal to kids has been linked to an increase in youth vaping and e-cigarette use. *The Snohomish Health District supports state and federal bans on the sale of flavored vapor products, increased funding for vape education and outreach, increased oversight on the manufacturing and sales of vapor products, and additional research on the health impacts of vaping and vapor products.*



Suicide as a Notifiable Condition

Rates of suicide are increasing across all populations in Snohomish County and has been identified as a top issue of concern. The purpose of notifiable conditions reporting is to enable public health officials to track suicides in real time (rather than waiting 12-18 months for data to emerge from the death certificate-based mortality surveillance system) and to take appropriate actions where feasible to prevent additional suicide. *The Snohomish Health District supports legislation adding suicide as a notifiable condition to WAC 246-101.*



Quarantine or Isolation Employment Protection

As the rate of infectious diseases rise so does the use of quarantine or isolation (WAC 246-100-040). This stems the spread of disease yet leaves the individual and care givers at risk for loss of employment and income replacement. These impacts are being experienced by individuals with coronavirus. *The Snohomish Health District supports legislation providing protections for impacted individuals and caregivers.*



Housing and Health

The linkages between housing and health is a well-researched determinate of health. Health impacts related to housing are wide ranging and include communicable diseases, mental health, and respiratory diseases. *The Snohomish Health District supports legislation improving the stability, safety, quality, and affordability of housing as a means to achieving improved population health outcomes.*