

Health & Medicine Policy Research Group

2019 Policy Agenda

Health & Medicine's policy agenda seeks to advance our core [values and mission](#) through policy research, education, advocacy, and collaborative action.

We take a public health approach, recognizing that an individual's health is shaped by life circumstances that fall outside the traditional purview of the health care system from community violence to structural racism, housing, income, education, and other social determinants of health and structural inequities. Therefore, we seek to advance equity around areas like economic justice which enhance wellbeing on an individual and community level.

While these are our priorities for the year, Health & Medicine has always remained nimble and responsive in the face of emerging challenges. We raise up issues and advance progressive policy change through collaboration, solutions-focused dialogue, narrative change, and advocacy on emerging public health challenges. Though our work is state and regionally based, we remain committed to standing with our community to boldly resist regressive and discriminatory federal policies that impact Illinois residents.

Economic Justice

- Promote the replacement of Illinois' flat income tax with a progressive income tax.
 - Illinois is one of just eight states with a flat rate income tax—setting up one of the most regressive state and local tax systems nationally.
- Support and advance movements that guarantee a thriving wage for all and examine practical implications for Illinois workers.
- Advance efforts for paid sick, family, and parental leave as important steps toward greater economic security for Illinois families.
- Strengthen programs and policies like SNAP, TANF, and the earned income tax credit that help people stay out of poverty.
- Support policies that advance quality jobs, worker protections, and other equitable practices like paid internship opportunities.

Health and Health Care

- Promote dialogue and policy that supports Healthcare for All.
- Expand Medicare for all.
 - We support a system where healthcare is a human right, guaranteed by health insurance for all, and accessible and free at the point of service.
- Simplify the complex Medicaid determination and renewal process in Illinois, which currently impedes access to care and causes unnecessary strain on our safety net.
- Advance action and legislation for oversight and enforcement of nursing home safety laws to protect the health of the over 100,000 Illinoisans who reside in homes.
- Lead efforts to ensure that home- and community-based services for older adults and people with disabilities are adequately funded and monitored, in order to allow all adults to live in the least restrictive environment of their choosing.
- Champion efforts to ensure that all people—particularly undocumented and other marginalized populations—have access to safe, affirming, and welcoming healthcare and social services.
- Support healthcare providers and institutions to adopt and advance trauma-informed policies and practices which can potentially improve patient engagement, reduce avoidable care and excess costs, and improve public health.
- Use an equity lens in the development and implementation of public health improvement plans. A “health equity in all policies” approach supports the health of all people.

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Health Workforce

- Encourage healthcare systems to advance policies and practices to support the workforce, address trauma, and prevent and mitigate burnout—a growing threat to healthcare quality, patient safety, provider wellbeing, and employee retention.
- Reduce barriers to employment, including stronger record expungement laws, fully-funded MAP grants, and adequate transportation.
- Advocate for the expansion of scholarship and loan repayment programs to increase accessibility and ensure diversity.
- Champion policies and programs that help diversify the health workforce at all points along the career trajectory from pre-K through health professions training and education.
- Advance certification and reimbursement strategies for Community Health Workers in Illinois.
- Advance policies that support a robust and adequately funded long-term care workforce to support our expanding aging population and people with disabilities.

Thriving & Equitable Communities

- Advance public narrative about safe consumption sites and other innovative responses to the opioid crisis in Cook County.
- Engage City leaders to commit to making Chicago a Liveable City for seniors, people with disabilities, and thereby for all Chicagoans.
- Create an ACEs and Trauma-Informed Task force and support trauma-informed policymaking and budgeting across all sectors.
- Collaborate with community groups on policies and interventions to address high lead levels in the Chicago water supply and other environmental threats.
- Advance equitable housing policy including proactive rental inspections to protect residents from health hazards, lifting the ban on rent control, and working for just-cause eviction policies.
- Support marijuana legalization that equitably distributes business opportunities and revenue while supporting common-sense expungement measures.
- Engage in efforts to ensure reproductive rights, safeguard maternal child health, and diversify birthing options—like freestanding birth centers—in Illinois.
- Support traumatized communities and address violence by advocating for police accountability, elimination of gang databases, and advancement of restorative justice.
- Champion public health's role in advancing equitable, high-quality, trauma-informed, and fully-funded public education for all children, including the expansion of STEAM programming.