EMPOWERING POLICYMAKERS TO BECOME SUPPORTERS OF AND INVEST IN PUBLIC HEALTH

A RESOURCE GUIDE

ASPPH ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS & PROGRAMS OF PUBLIC HEALTH

INTRODUCTION

The Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health (ASPPH) and its Communications and Marketing members proudly present a public health awareness resource guide geared toward increasing the public and policymakers' understanding and support of investing in public health.

Public health interventions improve health outcomes and save money by preventing or reducing the burden of diseases, decreasing healthcare costs, and increasing economic productivity. According to a **2022 report** by the Center for American Progress (CAP), investing in public health can result in significant cost savings for individuals and society. The report states that "one study in California found that every $1 invested in public health yields up to $88 in improved health status and benefits to society." Investing in public health interventions is a wise decision for improving health outcomes and a smart financial decision for both individuals and society.

Additionally, public health needs to be funded and prioritized regularly and sustainably, not just during emergencies. For instance, a recent *New York Times* **article** discussed the pitfalls of "stop-and-go" federal funding in Covid-19 hotspots. The article spotlights how chronic disinvestment in public health leaves state agencies and departments unprepared to quickly scale up emergency responses and workforce needs.

As schools of public health, we have a responsibility to our communities and to our students - the future members of the public health workforce - to advocate for stronger, consistent support from local and federal policymakers. Working together, we can achieve our shared mission to improve and protect the health of all.

In this resource guide, we provide key messaging ASPPH members and other schools and programs of public health can use when talking with the public as well as to local and federal policymakers about the need for sustained public health investments. We also provide suggested social media content and imagery, email/newsletter copy, videos and scripts, issue briefs for policy staff, mini-hill day materials, an advocacy resource guide, and a sample press release promoting the campaign.

Why Schools and Programs of Public Health?

- We are the trusted source of information on academic public health, dedicated to teaching and performing the science.
- Schools and programs of public health are educating our future public health workforce and providing rigorous evidence to make decisions for a healthier world.
- The need to advocate for a renewed investment and commitment to our nation's public health has never been greater than in this era of disinformation, a significant public health threat itself.
- With more than 104,000 students, faculty, researchers, and staff the ASPPH community is uniquely positioned to elevate the universally shared goals and ideals of public health to budgetary decision-makers at the state and local levels.

TAGLINE

Public Health: providing all Americans* the freedom from preventable disease and harm

Can replace with "all people"

Why? Public health is the foundation of thriving communities and a safe society. It is an essential and yet, often invisible part of, not only our healthcare system, but our daily lives. Our nation's public health workforce aims to prevent disease, prolong life, and promote health and well-being for all people, regardless of where they live. Public health is the reason for clean drinking water, for the eradication of polio, for our seat belt laws, safe work environments, clean air, and healthy foods. You may not always see or recognize it, but public health plays a vital role in our daily lives. Academic institutions of public health play a vital role in advancing health in their communities. This includes partnering with state and local health departments, community health practice programs, and research collaborations.

KEY MESSAGES/CONVERSATION STARTERS

Many of the suggested key messages below can be customized and localized to your school or program's unique needs and to the different organizational lenses and issues you are addressing with your policymakers. We have also included general messaging. We suggest using these in meetings and conversations with policymakers as talking points, as social media posts, or in your other external outreach work.

Local/State Messages:

1. State and local health departments and professionals know how to serve their neighbors, for example, *(Insert your school or program example).* Congress should continue to provide the resources these state and local community members need to serve their neighbors.

   Example: State and local health departments and professionals know how to serve their neighbors. For example, University of Minnesota School of Public Health's Master of Healthcare Administration students recently partnered with two Minneapolis-based organizations to fine-tune decision-making around their bold initiative — to create an intentional community of "tiny homes" to provide stability and better health for people who are experiencing homelessness. Congress should continue to provide the resources these state and local community members need to serve their neighbors.

2. Where you live shouldn't determine how healthy you are. Your _____ county/district is less healthy than _____ [Utilize comparison datasets from ____]

3. XYZ public health students_____ are addressing our local challenges. For example, ____ have partnered with XYZ community organizations to increase access to _____.

4. XYZ Centers/Researchers at ____ School of Public Health _____ are addressing our local challenges. For example, ____ have done groundbreaking research on _____ and are working with community partners to implement solutions.

   Example: Boston University School of Public Health researchers and community partners are working together to plant trees, eliminate unnecessary concrete, and other improvements to reduce the sweltering and dangerous temperatures to residents. With state investment, we could expand these efforts to other cities in Massachusetts.

Federal:

1. A healthier nation and workforce create a stronger economy by preventing disruption from diseases, illnesses, and injuries. Thank you to Congress who passed the PREVENT Pandemics Act in late 2022. We also urge Congress to provide funding for the Public Health Student Repayment Program, which was authorized in the PREVENTS bill.
    a. Or, be more general and ask them to provide the necessary funding for federal public health programs at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Centers for Diseases Control and Prevention (CDC).
    b. And/or, add in customizable action examples such as: spend more on public health, encourage/support wellness check-ups, prevention, and vaccinations.

2. Consistent and sustainable public health funding creates jobs and protects our economic and national security. When we are caught off guard by infectious disease, natural disasters, or economic crises, the “boom and bust” cycle of public health funding means we cannot rapidly respond. As described by **Lawrence Gostin**, “Right now, only about 5% of the country's health care dollars are spent on public health and preventing the next crisis."

3. Low, below-market wages for publicly funded public health positions do not provide sufficient salary levels for recent graduates, preventing them from taking these vital jobs to ensure our country continues running. Tell your lawmakers to fund The Public Health Workforce Loan Repayment (PHWLR) program, which provides loan repayment to public health professionals in exchange for working in a local, state, Territorial, or Tribal public health department. This program is essential to ensure the recruitment and retention of the frontline public health workforce across the nation.

4. Like the foundation holding up a house, our healthcare system is built on the foundation of public health. We need to tell our lawmakers to shore up the foundation through more funding for the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Centers for Diseases Control and Prevention (CDC), the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), and the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ).

5. Let’s connect people and information so they work together to protect everyone’s health. Modernizing our public health systems is a critical national security issue. The stronger our systems and data are, the better prepared and protected we are from threats.

Local and Federal Policymakers and the General Public:

1. Public health brings together everyone who has a role to play in a community's health—schools and universities, not-for-profit and for-profit businesses, government agencies, and community leaders —to eliminate health threats before they can spread. Supporting public health, and the schools and programs of public health that educate our future workforce, will keep everyone safe.

2. Put the PUBLIC back in “public health” to restore trust. By increasing cooperation between elected officials, public health experts, the community, and the general public will feel included in decision-making.

3. The work of public health is the work of prevention. Public health is the foundation for a healthy society. We reach people **before** they get sick. An increase in sustainable funding would support our public health workforce.

4. All Americans have the right to be healthy and live in communities free **from** preventable injury and disease. We are grateful that Congress gave billions more dollars to public health infrastructure earlier this year, but we need strong standards and a robust public health infrastructure so that every American and every community has the opportunity to be healthy.

5. **When employees work** while sick, this costs the national economy $234 billion annually in lost productivity. Better health means a healthier workforce. An investment in public health is also an investment in productivity. Tell lawmakers to invest in public health and help strengthen our economy.

6. Polio was cause for despair. The lack of treatment for HIV was, too. Today, these diseases, while still the cause of sickness and death, are far more manageable than they once were. This is because we recognized, collectively, that these are public health challenges, and we chose to work together to address them as such. Encourage the funding of ongoing research into today's diseases, engage with public opinion, and marshal the political will necessary to make a real difference.

RESOURCES

Our campaign and resource guide were influenced by the following articles and reports:

1. **As COVID Turns 3, Experts Worry Where the Next Pandemic Will Come From – and If We'll be Ready** – A *USA Today* article
2. **Commission on Information Disorder Final Report** – A report by The Aspen Institute's Commission on Information Disorder
3. **The Exodus of State and Local Public Health Employees: Separations Started Before and Continued Throughout COVID-19** – A public health research article appearing in Health Affairs
4. **Fighting for Public Health: Findings, Opportunities, and Next Steps from a Feasibility Study to Strengthen Public Health Advocacy** – A report prepared for *The Network for Public Health Law*
5. **How Investing in Public Health Will Strengthen America's Health** – A Center for American Progress report

6. **Meeting America's Public Health Challenge: Recommendations for Building a National Public Health System That Addresses Ongoing and Future Health Crises, Advances Equity, and Earns Trust** –The Commonwealth Fund Commission's report
7. **Motivating The Public to Support Public Health: A Toolkit for Communicating With Non-Experts** – A toolkit by Public Health Reaching Across Sectors (PHRASES), a partnership of the de Beaumont Foundation and the Aspen Institute
8. **Paid Sick Days Are Good for Business** – A National Partnership for Women & Families fact sheet
9. **Why Mississippi, a Covid Hot Spot, Left Millions in Pandemic Aid Unspent** – A *New York Times* article

SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

In addition to each key message above that can be shared as individual social media posts and slotted into your existing content/social calendars, the following general posts can be used as well.

For hashtags, we suggest taking advantage of applicable conversations already happening by using general public health-related ones such as #publichealth, #publichealthmatters, and #thisispublichealth. Learn more **here**.

You can find imagery to accompany any social posts, or emails, you choose to do **here**.

LinkedIn & Facebook:

We believe that investing in public health is investing in the health and well-being of our communities. And empowering and encouraging policymakers to become supporters of and invest in public health has never been greater than in this era of disinformation.

The @ASPPH community is uniquely positioned to elevate universally shared goals and ideals of public health to decision-makers at all levels of government. This is why ASPPH created a list of conversation starters and key messages within a resource guide for schools and programs of public health to use when engaging with local and federal policymakers about the need to invest in public health and to increase public support and understanding.

Please find the key messages and resource guide at **https://bit.ly/EmpoweringPolicymakers** and disseminate to others by sharing this post. #publichealth #publichealthmatters #thisispublichealth

Instagram Feed:

We believe that investing in public health is investing in the health and well-being of our communities. And empowering and encouraging policymakers to become supporters of and invest in public health has never been greater than in this era of disinformation.

The @aspphorg community is uniquely positioned to elevate universally shared goals and ideals of public health to decision-makers at all levels of government. This is why ASPPH created a list of conversation starters and key messages within a resource guide for schools and programs of public health to use when engaging with local and federal policymakers about the need to invest in public health and to increase public support and understanding.

Please find the key messages and resource guide at the link to resources in @aspphorg's bio and disseminate them to others by sharing this post. #publichealth #publichealthmatters #thisispublichealth

Instagram Story:

We believe that investing in public health is investing in the health and well-being of our communities. And empowering and encouraging policymakers to become supporters of and invest in public health has never been greater than in this era of disinformation.

Check out this list of conversation starters and key messages within a resource guide created by ASPPH to use when engaging with local and federal policymakers and to increase public support and understanding. #publichealth #publichealthmatters #thisispublichealth

(Add a link story element - **https://bit.ly/EmpoweringPolicymakers**
Don't forget to tag us - @aspphorg)

VIDEOS AND SCRIPTS

Below are some example videos featuring public health professionals describing why they "I ♥ PublicHealth."

Each February, ASPPH – through our **This is Public Health** (TIPH) initiative – celebrates I

💙 Public Health Month to highlight the important and varied role public health plays in the global community. These videos can be used in a variety of ways: on social media, in emails, in virtual or in-person meetings with policymakers to help demonstrate what public health is and why it needs to be funded.

Option One – one collage video compilation and 5 individual I 💙 Public Health branded videos
Option Two – select from 20 other individual testimonial videos

Why Did You Chose the Field of Public Health?

Your schools and programs could also consider **gathering videos of students, fellows and staff about why they work in public health** or are pursuing a career in it. We have created instructions and a brief script they could follow while recording their videos.

Instructions and Script

Please share the key messages/conversation starters found in this resource guide with the person recording a video ahead of time.

Script Talking Points

Thank you for taking the time to share why you work in, or are pursuing a career in, public health. Please refer to the bullet points below to help craft your video message.

1. Please start by introducing yourself - state your name, title, and organization.
2. Tell us why you chose the field of public health and why you encourage others to as well.
3. If any of our key messages resonate with you, please mention them in your video.
4. (Optional): What would you like policymakers to understand about the importance of funding public health?

How Have Public Health Professionals Positively Influenced and Benefited You?

Instructions and a script for **videos and narratives featuring members of your local communities explaining how they benefit from the work of public health professionals** can be found below.

Instructions and Script

Please share the key messages/conversation starters found in this resource guide with the person recording a video ahead of time.

Script Talking Points

Thank you for taking the time to share how you've benefited from the work of public health professionals in your local community. Please refer to the bullet points below to help craft your

video message.

1. Please start by introducing yourself - state your name, title, and organization.
2. Tell us how your work or interactions with public health professionals have positively influenced and benefited you.
3. If any of our key messages resonate with you, please mention them in your video.
4. (Optional): What would you like policymakers to understand about the importance of funding public health?

EMAIL/NEWSLETTER COPY

To Send to Key Partners

Subject Line: Empowering Policymakers to Become Supporters of and Invest in Public Health: A Campaign and Resource Guide for Sustained Public Health Funding

Dear [Recipient],

The **Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health** (ASPPH) and its Communications and Marketing members, including {INSERT SCHOOL NAME}, are proud to present a public health awareness resource guide aimed at increasing public and policymaker support for sustained public health investments.

In this **resource guide**, we provide key messaging and resources that ASPPH members and other schools and programs of public health can use when talking with the public, as well as local and federal policymakers, to advocate for sustained public health investments.

Academic institutions of public health play a vital role in advancing health in their communities, including partnering with state and local health departments, community health practice programs, and research collaborations. We believe that investing in public health is investing in the health and well-being of our communities.

The need for sustained public health funding has never been greater than in this era of

disinformation, a significant public health threat itself. We urge you to join us in this advocacy effort to create a healthier world by downloading our **resource guide**.

Thank you for being a supporter of sustained public health funding.

For a Newsletter Article (Long)

Title: Empowering Policymakers to Become Supporters of and Invest in Public Health: A Campaign and Resource Guide

The **Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health** (ASPPH) and its Communications and Marketing members, including {INSERT SCHOOL NAME}, are proud to present a public health awareness resource guide aimed at increasing public and policymaker support for sustained public health investments.

In this **resource guide**, we provide key messaging and resources that ASPPH members and other schools and programs of public health can use when talking with the public, as well as local and federal policymakers, to advocate for sustained public health investments.

Academic institutions of public health play a vital role in advancing health in their communities, including partnering with state and local health departments, community health practice programs, and research collaborations. We believe that investing in public health is investing in the health and well-being of our communities.

The need for sustained public health funding has never been greater than in this era of disinformation, a significant public health threat itself. We urge you to join us in this advocacy effort to create a healthier world by downloading and using our **resource guide**.

Join us in becoming a supporter of sustained public health funding.

For a Newsletter Article (Short)

Title: Empowering Policymakers to Become Supporters of and Invest in Public Health: A Campaign and Resource Guide

The **Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health** (ASPPH) and its members, including {INSERT SCHOOL NAME}, recently released a resource guide aimed at increasing public and policymaker support for sustained public health investments.

In this **resource guide,** we provide key messaging and resources that ASPPH members and other schools and programs of public health can use when talking with the public, as well as local and federal policymakers, to advocate for sustained public health investments.

The need for sustained public health funding has never been greater than in this era of disinformation, a significant public health threat itself. We urge you to join us in this advocacy effort to create a healthier world by downloading and using our **resource guide**.

PRESS RELEASE

*ASPPH will utilize the press release below. Our members, and other schools and programs of public health, can then choose to share our release, which will be posted **online**, or create their own with ours providing guidance.*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(DATE: City, State) The **Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health** (ASPPH) and its Communications and Marketing members, including {Insert School or Program Name} are proud to announce the launch of a new campaign and resource guide to increase public and policymaker understanding and support for public health. The **public health awareness resource guide** is a valuable resource for ASPPH and its members, providing essential messaging and advocacy tools to secure sustained public health investments.

Public health interventions improve health outcomes and save money by preventing or reducing the burden of diseases, decreasing healthcare costs, and increasing economic productivity. According to a **2022 report** by the Center for American Progress (CAP), investing in public health can result in significant cost savings for individuals and society. The report states that "one study in California found that every $1 invested in public health yields up to $88 in improved health status and benefits to society." Investing in public health interventions is a wise decision for improving health outcomes and a smart financial decision for both individuals and society.

“The need for regular and sustainable funding for public health has become increasingly apparent during the COVID-19 pandemic. With stop-and-go government funding often arriving too late to make an impact, our new resource guide aims to promote sustained public health investments,” says Tim Leshan, ASPPH’s Chief External Relations and Advocacy Officer.

The **resource guide** includes key messaging that ASPPH members and other schools and

programs of public health can use when talking with the public or policymakers about the need for ongoing investments in public health. It also provides suggested social media content, email and newsletter copy, videos and scripts, issue briefs for policy staff, and more.

Academic institutions of public health play a vital role in advancing health in their communities, including partnering with state and local health departments, community health practice programs, and research collaborations. Schools and programs of public health also educate the future public health workforce and provide rigorous evidence to make decisions for a healthier world. In this era of disinformation, advocating for a renewed investment and commitment to our nation's public health is more critical than ever. We believe that investing in public health is investing in the health and well-being of our communities.

With over 104,000 students, faculty, researchers, and staff, the ASPPH community is uniquely positioned to elevate public health's universally shared goals and ideals to budgetary decision-makers at the state and local levels. The ASPPH campaign and resource guide aim to support these efforts and ensure investments in public health that benefit everyone.

***
(Add your school or program's boilerplate "About Us" language.)

ADVOCACY MATERIALS

The advocacy materials below are focused on federal public health programs, but the concepts can be applied to state-funded programs.

FY 24 Issue Briefs for Policy Staff

Below are four policy briefs related to issues ASPPH is advocating for and geared toward lawmakers:

- **Academic Centers for Public Health Preparedness and Response**
- **Center for Forecasting and Outbreak Analytics FY 2024 Issue Brief**
- **National Institutes of Health FY 2024 Issue Brief**
- **Public Health Workforce Loan Repayment Program One-Pager**

Mini-Hill Day Materials

View our "**Advocacy 101**" deck and learn more about Public Health advocacy at the federal level. ASPPH also provided our members with a **FY 2024 Appropriations leaders' letter.**

Advocacy Handbook

ASPPH Members also have access to an overall Advocacy Handbook that can be accessed via **this page** (login required). The handbook will help members better understand the public health advocacy process, advocacy strategies, and how to engage with policymakers. It includes background information on congressional committees, tips and strategies for meeting with policymakers, and resources for congressional outreach and communication.