Kitsap Public Health District prevents disease and protects and promotes the health of all people in Kitsap County. To forward this mission, we:

- **Support** policies with the objective of protecting the health of Kitsap residents.
- **Support** efforts to maintain funding to local public health services and programs.
- **Oppose** any policies that reduce local health authority.

**POLICY MAP INTRODUCTION**

**What is the Policy Map?**

The Health District’s Policy Map reflects focus areas of public health significance for policy analysis and intersectional policy development. The Health District strives to use policy development as a way to blend health into policymaking and to improve health equity through local, state, and federal decision making with community partners. The focus areas included in this map reflect topics of high importance in our community. These topics are informed by the 2023 Community Health Assessment and ongoing efforts at the Health District.

**The following focus areas are outlined in the Policy Map:**

- Optimize foundational public health services;
- Promote equitable access to quality healthcare and services;
- Respond to emerging public health needs to increase health equity;
- Support collective impact championed by community partners.

**WHAT IS A PUBLIC HEALTH APPROACH?**

As a public health agency, we:

- Are concerned with protecting the health of entire populations;
- Recognize and define health issues;
- Use data and evidence to identify and implement solutions and evaluate success;
- Emphasize collaboration and community engagement;
- Prioritize prevention.

**KEY CONCEPTS**

Important concepts include:

- Policy: laws, regulations, rules, and other guidelines that direct a course of action
- Local policy: matters of policy specific to jurisdictions, community partners, and data trends in Kitsap County
- State policy: matters of policy specific to the Washington state legislative session

**2023 COMMUNITY HEALTH ASSESSMENT**

Scan this code to view the full Kitsap Community Health Assessment.
**LOCAL POLICY FOCUS AREAS**

**OPTIMIZE FOUNDATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES**

Continued **funding for public health** is critical to local public health programs, services, and the ability to respond to emerging health concerns.

**State-level goal:** Maintain and increase public health funding.

**Federal-level goal:** Support federal action to enhance public health such as the Public Health Infrastructure Saves Lives Act.

**PROMOTE EQUITABLE ACCESS TO QUALITY HEALTHCARE & SERVICES**

We are committed to all people in Kitsap having **access to affordable and culturally responsive healthcare** and services.

**Support actions that align with Kitsap Public Health Board resolutions** 2021-01 (Declaring Racism a Public Health Crisis) and 2023-04 (Declaring High Healthcare Costs and Inadequate Access to Healthcare Services Public Health Crises). This includes implementing recommendations in the 2024 Kitsap Healthcare Assessment.

**Improve maternal and infant health outcomes** to ensure Black and Indigenous people and communities of color have equitable access to quality perinatal care and services. One out of two Kitsap residents (52%) who gave birth in 2021 received adequate prenatal care.

**Promoting access to coordinated care, mental, medical, and behavioral health services for all.** Among 2022 Kitsap Community Resources survey participants (18 years or older), appointment wait times, cost, and finding a counselor represented barriers to getting needed mental healthcare.

**RELATED KPHD ACTIVITIES**

- The Health District looks forward to growing the Black Infant Health Program and exploring ways to implement several of the 2023 Kitsap Maternal and Infant Health Forum community recommendations.
- Increase public health representation in behavioral health activities, including support for youth, pregnant and parenting families, and partnership collaboration.
RESPOND TO EMERGING PUBLIC HEALTH NEEDS TO INCREASE HEALTH EQUITY

Expand resources for opioid response and substance use disorder prevention. This includes services along the continuum of care given increasing opioid overdose deaths in Kitsap since 2018.

Support innovative and cost effective initiatives to facilitate communicable disease containment as state law directs public health agencies to monitor and investigate more than 100 reportable conditions.

Prepare communities for health impacts caused by climate change and other environmental risks as extreme weather and changing temperatures intensify.

RELATED KPHD ACTIVITIES

- Strengthen cross-agency action through the Health District’s Substance Use Prevention and Response Program.
- Work to improve disease testing and treatment service navigation for our community as public health agencies are mandated to control and investigate communicable disease.
- Explore assessment and engagement opportunities to increase community resilience to future impacts of climate change, disasters, and emergencies.

SUPPORT INITIATIVES CHAMPIONED BY COMMUNITY PARTNERS

We support policy development led by community partners that leads to positive public health outcomes.

Improve the built environment and expand reliable, multimodal transportation. 49% of respondents to a 2022 Kitsap Transit survey preferred investments in high-capacity transit.

Bolster the health of existing housing options, increase low-income housing, and take action to prevent individuals and families from falling into homelessness. The rate of homelessness in Kitsap has increased since 2022.

Support policies that increase health literacy, public health education, social connectedness, and wellness to increase longevity.

RELATED KPHD ACTIVITIES

- Enhance public health participation in planning and community development activities.
- Convene and inspire new collaborative programs in the community, including in Kitsap schools.
- Increase language access and communication of public health information.