



Agenda Items for ODH "Together We Can" Calls, weekly on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays: [email local.support@odh.ohio.gov](mailto:local.support@odh.ohio.gov)

Agenda Items for Joint AOHC-ODH Task Forces - click [here](#) to submit

Ohio News

Director Vanderhoff Reviews ODH Budget and RHTP with House Health Committee

Last Wednesday, Department of Health Director Bruce Vanderhoff reviewed the Department's budget and the Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP) plan with the House Health Committee.

He started his presentation with an overview of spending noting that ODH is fully utilizing the funds received in the last state budget. ODH is approximately 60% of the way through fiscal year 2026, with 40% of budget remaining. General Revenue state funding is 9% of the Department's FY 2026 budget. Federal funding is 70% and the remaining 21% are dedicated purpose funds. He updated the Committee on specific program funding including OhioSEE and school-based health centers.

In his overview of the RHTP, he explained that the award is divided into the following categories:

- Ohio Rural Health Innovation Hubs/Clinically Integrated Networks (CINs) - \$92,000,000. This bucket is to support innovative and transformational work within hospitals.
- Primary care services particularly impacting students.
- Ohio Rural School Based Health Centers (SBHCs) - \$21,180,000
- OhioSEE Rural Expansion - \$25,000,000
- Workforce: Creating more opportunities for rural Ohioans to enter the healthcare workforce, including community health workers, expanding pharmacist scope of practice with point of care testing, and treatment for things like strep or flu, reaching kids early in school with healthcare career paths, etc. - \$13,540,990
- Healthier Ohio Initiatives (Preventing and addressing chronic disease) - \$16,687,000
- Rural Ohio Emergency Care/EMS Transformation - \$12,000,000, Improving access, supporting the workforce, and other innovations
- EMR Access for Pharmacies in Rural Ohio - \$3,500,000
- Maternal and Child Health in Rural Ohio - \$7,000,000, focused especially on health behaviors, prenatal care, breastfeeding, etc.
- Equipment and Supplies - \$9,000,000. This funding enables centralized purchasing that more cost-effectively supports local projects, e.g. mobile units, dental equipment, technology (e.g., personal health monitoring devices)
- Program Implementation \$2,122,272, amounting to 1.1% of the total award.

The Health Committee testimony and Q&A can be viewed here: [Health Committee](#), and Director Vanderhoff's written testimony can be found here: [ODH Written Testimony and Attachments](#).

Bill Waiving Birth Certificate Fees for Individuals Experiencing Homelessness Clears the House

HB 472 passed the House on February 18, 2026 and is now pending in the Senate. The bill requires the fees for certain personal documents to be waived for individuals experiencing homelessness. HB

472 requires the Director of Health to waive all fees for a certified copy of a birth record (full birth record), a certification of birth (condensed birth record), or replacement of a birth record.

For the fee to be waived, one of the following must verify that the individual is experiencing homelessness: (1) a director or person designated by the director of a government or nonprofit agency that receives funding to provide services to individuals experiencing homelessness, (2) a school social worker, school counselor, or local educational agency liaison for homeless children and youths, (3) a director or person designated by a director of either a federal TRIO program or Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Program (GEAR UP), or (4) a financial aid administrator for an institution of higher education. The fee for each type of document may be waived only once in a 12-month period.

AI Committee Survey

The AOHC Artificial Intelligence Committee is distributing a [brief survey](#) to gather your input regarding the current use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) within Ohio's local health departments.

As AI tools such as Magai, ChatGPT, Copilot, Claude, and other emerging platforms become more integrated into daily workflows, it is important for us to better understand:

- Whether and how AI tools are currently being used in your department
- Your department's level of readiness and interest in future AI adoption
- Perceived benefits, risks, and compliance considerations
- Training and policy needs that would support safe and effective implementation

The results of this survey will help guide the AI Committee's work, including the development of template policies, training opportunities, pilot initiatives, and even potential statewide resources.

Your input is essential. Whether your department is actively using AI or simply exploring its potential, your perspective will help shape a thoughtful and practical approach for Ohio's public health system.

The survey should take approximately ten minutes to complete. We kindly ask that you respond no later than **March 12th and no more than 1 response per LHD.**

Thank you in advance for your participation!

National News

AOHC Members Participate in Local Public Health on the Hill

On February 25, local health officials from across the country joined NACCHO on Capitol Hill for this year's annual Local Public Health on the Hill Day. Public health leaders from NACCHO's Board of Directors, SACCHO and NALBOH leadership, and the Big Cities Health Coalition met with members of Congress and senior staff from 138

Congressional offices. During these meetings, lawmakers heard about the challenges facing local health departments.

In meetings with lawmakers, participants made the case for stability and predictability of federal funding, especially at CDC. Participants urged Congress to provide \$100 million in Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 for the Public Health Workforce Loan Repayment Program and to allocate \$1 billion for CDC's Public Health Infrastructure and Capacity Grant (PHIG) Program. These investments support workforce development, health information systems, policy and communications, and community partnerships while strengthening health departments' ability to meet community needs.

AOHC members and partners met with Senators Bernie Moreno and Jon Husted, as well as staff for several members of the U.S. House of Representatives—including Shontel Brown, Joyce Beatty, Jim Jordan, and Max Miller—to discuss the critical role sustained federal investment plays in supporting public health. For additional details, please see the [one-pager](#) that was shared with congressional offices.



All Local Health Official Call

NACCHO's standing all Local Health Official call builds connections across the LHO community, ensures timely updates, and allows for dialogue and discussion with federal partners on a regular basis. These calls are a direct result of feedback from you, our members, about the need to better connect with each other and federal partners. Please plan to attend monthly to not only hear updates on guidance and initiatives from CDC, FDA, or other federal partners, but also to ask questions and give feedback to ensure federal efforts are workable locally. If you cannot attend, please designate a senior deputy to join when needed. Please do not forward outside the health department. Dates & Times:

- Mar 26, 2026 03:00 PM
- Apr 23, 2026 03:00 PM

Meeting Registration Link: [Meeting Registration - Zoom](#)

Funding Opportunities

Ohio Awarded Rural Health Transformation Funds

On Dec. 29, 2025, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services announced first-year Rural Health Transformation (RHT) Program awards. Ohio will receive a total of \$202,030,262.

The Ohio Department of Health has released two RFPs. Ohio is expected to issue a total of 11 different RFPs—most RFPs will come from the ODH, although Ohio EPA, Department of Public Safety, and Department of Children and Youth will each be issuing an RFP.

RFPs will be posted to the ODH website as they are approved. View RFPs and sign up for notifications on ODH's [RHT webpage](#).

Click [here](#) for a map of the RHT counties of focus.

NACCHO

For more information on all of NACCHO's funding opportunities, click here: <https://www.naccho.org/opportunities/opportunities/funding-opportunities>

Educational Opportunities

AOHC Educational Opportunities in 2026

| Course | Dates |
|--------|-------|
|--------|-------|

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|---|---|
| New Employee Training Delaware Health Department 470 S. Sandusky St. Delaware, Ohio 43015 | March 4 July 8 November 4 |
| Health Commissioner University Embassy Suites, Dublin 5100 Upper Metro Place Dublin, Ohio 43017 | May 11-13 |
| Fiscal Training Embassy Suites, Dublin 5100 Upper Metro Place Dublin, Ohio 43017 | April 14-15 |
| LEHDS Embassy Suites, Dublin 5100 Upper Metro Place Dublin, Ohio 43017 | April 14-15 |

Registration is open for Spring classes. Click [here](#) for more information and course descriptions.

Spring Conference – April 27-29, 2026

The Ohioan Hotel & Event Center, Lewis Center (formerly the Nationwide Hotel & Conference Center)

Fall Conference – September 21-23, 2026

Embassy Suites, Dublin

LEHDS Leadership Training – Only 10 Spots Available!

Encourage your staff to build their leadership skills and strengthen your team’s impact in Ohio’s public health system by recommending them for the LEHDS Training, taking place April 14–15, 2026.

Designed for emerging and current leaders in local health departments, this two-day program features expert speakers and practical sessions focused on the real-world challenges facing public health teams. By investing in this training, you’ll help your staff gain the tools, confidence, and leadership perspective needed to support your department’s mission and strengthen Ohio’s public health workforce.

Key Topics Include:

- Essential HR functions (progressive discipline, performance appraisal, attendance management)
- Ohio-specific guidelines for layoffs, workers’ compensation, FMLA/FSLA
- Performance management and quality improvement tools
- Strategies to prevent “Theft in Office”
- Communication and community engagement

- Cost methodology requirements and cost planning
- Funding sources and tools for legislative engagement

Participants will leave with actionable strategies to improve operations, support employees, and lead with confidence. Space is limited—10 seats still available! [Register now](#).

AI for the Public Good Public Health Symposium

The Bowling Green State University Ned Baker Public Health Symposium that will take place on April 2, 2026. This year's symposium explore “**AI for the Public Good,**” focusing on:

- The economic, environmental and ethical impacts of data centers
- The use of AI to enhance outcomes in criminal justice systems
- The development of problem-based AI tools to support environmental health professionals
- How AI-driven technologies can foster stronger human connection and wellbeing
- How BGSU is leveraging AI to expand academic innovation and new degree opportunities

Together, the program emphasizes responsible, community-centered applications of AI across various industries.

In-person and virtual options available. More information is available at this link: <https://events.bgsu.edu/event/public-allied-health-symposium>.

Shape Public Health in Your Community

The National Association of Counties, in partnership with de Beaumont, is accepting applications to the inaugural [Public Health Leadership Academy](#). This five-month, cohort-based program will support elected officials and public health leaders from 12 counties to build knowledge and shared understanding, strengthen collaboration, and develop actionable strategies to improve public health in their communities. [Applications due March 13.](#)

Call for Student Abstracts

Call for Student Abstracts: Ohio's Public Health Conference

The Ohio Public Health Association, in partnership with the Ohio Department of Health, Association of Ohio Health Commissioners, Ohio Association of Boards of Health, Ohio Environmental Health Association, and Ohio Society for Public Health Education, invites student abstracts for the 2026 Ohio Public Health Conference. The poster and oral presentation contest will take place April 28, 2026, at the Ohioan Hotel and Conference Center in Lewis Center, Ohio.

This is a valuable opportunity for students to present original work—such as research, course projects, program evaluations, data assessments, equity initiatives, or process improvements—related to public health in Ohio. Submissions are open to current students and recent graduates (Spring 2025 or later) from Ohio colleges and universities. Students attending remotely or enrolled out-of-state may also apply if their work is Ohio-focused. All majors and professional programs are welcome, as long as the project connects to public health practice in Ohio.

Abstracts must be submitted electronically by 11:59 p.m. on March 10, 2026, and include all information requested in the [online application](#). Late entries will not be considered. Students, at the time of application, must confirm their ability to participate if selected. Prizes will be awarded and selected presentations may be featured in the Ohio Journal of Public Health. Travel reimbursement within Ohio is available.

Submit no later than 11:59 pm March 10, 2026. Please direct all questions to student1@ohiopha.org. Authors of accepted abstracts must upload their final presentation or poster no later than April 17, 2026. Additional information and details referred to on the online application.

Upcoming Events

**March 4, 2026
9:00AM - 4:00PM**

**New Employee
Training -
March 2026**

Delaware Public Health
District

**March 13, 2026
9:30AM - 11:30AM**

**Public Affairs
Committee**

Virtual via MS Teams
Only

**March 20, 2026
9:30AM - 11:30AM**

**AOHC Board
Meeting**

AOHC Office or Virtual
via MS Teams