



Strengthening Public Health in Ohio

Public health is a cornerstone of a thriving community. Investing in prevention, healthcare access, and nutrition ensures a healthier population while reducing long-term healthcare costs. This brief outlines critical policy recommendations to address tobacco use, cardiac arrest survival, and food security, paving the way for a stronger, healthier Ohio.

Policy

Increased funding and policy changes are needed to support tobacco prevention, heart health initiatives, and equitable nutrition programs in Ohio. These changes align with best practices and evidence-based strategies to reduce smoking rates, improve cardiac arrest survival, and enhance access to healthy food and CPR training in schools. The state should allocate \$20 million annually to the Tobacco Use Prevention Fund to align with CDC recommendations and reduce youth and adult smoking rates. Additionally, \$606,800 should be appropriated annually to ensure all Ohio high school students meet CPR training requirements, improving cardiac arrest survival rates. The Ohio CARES Registry should receive \$500,000 annually through the Department of Public Safety to sustain and expand its impact on bystander CPR rates. To support nutrition initiatives, the Produce Perks program funding should be increased to \$2 million per year, expanding access to fresh, healthy food for low-income Ohioans.

Challenge

Ohio faces significant public health challenges due to insufficient funding for tobacco prevention, high smoking rates, and limited access to CPR training in schools, despite Ohio's heart disease mortality rate exceeding the national average. The Ohio Cardiac Arrest Registry (CARES) is underfunded and risks ceasing operations by 2025, despite its vital role in improving cardiac arrest survival rates. Nutrition insecurity also remains a concern, as the Produce Perks program lacks sufficient funding to expand its reach.

Opportunity

By implementing these budget recommendations, Ohio can significantly improve public health outcomes, reduce healthcare costs, and create a healthier future for its residents. Increased investment in tobacco prevention will help lower smoking rates and reduce associated health risks. Expanding CPR training and securing funding for the Ohio CARES Registry will improve cardiac arrest survival rates across the state. Enhancing nutrition programs, such as Produce Perks, will ensure better food access for

vulnerable populations, contributing to long-term health improvements. These strategic investments will create a stronger, healthier Ohio, benefiting individuals and communities alike.

Support Child Well-Being: Budget Recommendations

- Increase appropriation to \$20 million in each year of the biennium to the Tobacco Use Prevention Fund to reduce youth and adult smoking rates (Line item #440656).
- Create parity in the tax structure; Other Tobacco Products (OTP) should be taxed at the same rate as traditional cigarettes (25%).
- Appropriate \$606,800/year to GRF 200597 (Program and Project Support) to cover additional cost of training incoming senior class and ensure that all graduating students meet the CPR training curriculum requirement.
- Provide \$500,000 annually through the Department of Public Safety to sustain and expand the Ohio CARES Registry, enhancing bystander CPR rates and improving survival from cardiac arrest.
- Increase funding for the Produce Perks program to \$2 million per year, within the Department of Job and Family Service's TANF Block Grant, expanding access to fresh, healthy food for low-income Ohioans.

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