



Law and Policy are Essential to Public Health

Law and policy are critical components of effective public health practice. Whether you are responding to a novel infectious disease or an environmental threat, navigating a public health emergency, or implementing routine enforcement measures—understanding how to harness and strategically apply the power of law and policy is integral to improving the community’s health outcomes and promoting health equity.

How the Network for Public Health Law Can Help

The Network for Public Health Law (the Network) provides non-partisan legal technical assistance and resources. We collaborate with a broad set of partners across sectors to expand and enhance the use of practical legal and policy solutions to protect and promote the public’s health.

This document illustrates the Network’s broad capabilities and tailored approach to providing public health legal support to state and local public health practitioners. Examples provided here are specific to Michigan, but Network attorneys would be pleased to discuss opportunities to provide similar support in other states.

Training

- **State and Local Public Health Law Training:** Training topics are selected based on state and local health departments’ feedback obtained via surveys and focus group calls. Training materials incorporate state-specific examples to illustrate public health legal concepts.
- **Recurring Public Health Law 101 Training Sessions:** We provide an introductory training at statewide public health conferences. Content reflects current events and emergent public health legal and policy challenges using foundational public health legal concepts.
- **One-on-one Public Health Law 101 Training Sessions for New Health Officers:** We provide virtual, one-on-one Public Health Law 101 training sessions to new local health officers, their attorneys, and local governing entities upon request.
- **Public Health Data Privacy Training:** We provide basic HIPAA training sessions for local health department staff and may also cover 42 CFR Part 2.



Technical Assistance

- **Routine Technical Assistance:** We frequently provide legal technical assistance to local health departments on a variety of topics, such as public health legal authority and decision-making, data sharing, and liability protections.
- **State-Specific Resources:** We maintain Network resources on topics of common interest and develop state-specific resources on emergent public health legal issues, including:
 - Issue brief on [Mosquito Spraying to Reduce Spread of Eastern Equine Encephalitis Virus in Michigan: Legal, Ethical, and Practical Challenges](#).
 - [Summary of Authority and Actions Regarding Public Health Emergencies under Michigan Public Health Code](#)
 - [Legal Interventions for Environmental Hazards: Michigan](#)
- **COVID-19 Technical Assistance and FAQs:** We responded to numerous legal technical assistance requests from Michigan local health departments relating to the COVID-19 pandemic, especially regarding legal authority to implement various legal interventions. We provided an online [Frequently Asked Questions](#) webpage that has been widely distributed throughout the state, and responded to particularly challenging issues, such as our fact sheet on [Michigan School Districts' Legal Authority and Responsibility to Protect Students from COVID-19](#).
- **Amicus Brief:** We prepared an amicus brief for a Michigan-based lawsuit challenging state and local public health authority to issue COVID-19 mitigation orders.
- **Public Health Law 101 for the Michigan Legislature:** We presented a Public Health Law 101 session to the Michigan legislature regarding Michigan's Public Health Code.

Special Projects

- **COVID-19 After-Action Legal Report:** We conducted focus group interviews with local and state public health staff to understand the legal challenges health officials faced during COVID-19. Based on these interviews and lessons learned from legal technical assistance efforts, we provided a set of recommendations to the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.
- **Flint Water Crisis Legal Analysis:** We analyzed [what went wrong in Flint](#) from a legal perspective and identified structural legal flaws and implementation failures that allowed the crisis to happen. Products include a [Public Health Handbook for Communities under Emergency Management](#) and an [Emergency Manager Law Primer](#).
- **Flint Registry Legal Handbook:** We provided legal technical assistance to the [Flint Registry](#), a public health registry supporting those affected by the Flint water crisis.