



Registration Now Open: 2026 Public Health Law Virtual Summit

Registration is open for the 2026 Public Health Law Summit, a three-day virtual event exploring the essential role of law and policy in public health data modernization. Under the theme "Convening, Aligning and Building Trust to Transform Communities," sessions will cover legal frameworks for data exchange, confidentiality protections, and the role of law in supporting justice, community power, and AI in data technology. [Register here.](#)



Announcing Our Keynote Speaker

Matt Ritchey, PT, DPT, MPH (CAPT, USPHS)

We're pleased to announce CAPT Ritchey as our keynote speaker. As Director of the CDC's Office of Public Health Data, Surveillance, and Technology, CAPT Ritchey leads the national effort to build a smarter, faster, more connected public health data infrastructure.

Law & Policy Insights



An Analysis of Legal Considerations for Sharing Data Through Community Information Exchanges Q&A

Stephen Murphy, Director; Meghan Mead, Deputy Director; and Emma Kaeser, Senior Attorney, Network for Public Health Law—Mid-States Region, co-authored the article, "[An Analysis of Legal](#)

[Considerations for Sharing Data Through Community Information Exchanges.](#)” In this Q&A, they discuss how these community-governed systems facilitate data sharing among local health and social services providers and community-based organizations to promote holistic and coordinated care, and related law and policy considerations.

Resources



Bleeding Behind Bars: It Costs to Menstruate

Despite federal reforms like the First Step Act, incarcerated people across the country still struggle to access basic menstrual products, with only 25 states mandating that they be provided free of charge. Our new fact sheet, *Bleeding Behind Bars: It Costs to Menstruate*, examines the legislative landscape across all 50 states, the steep commissary prices that can consume over half of an incarcerated person’s monthly income, and firsthand accounts of the indignity this crisis creates.



State Laws to Prevent Utility Shutoffs During Extreme Heat

Heat is the deadliest weather-related hazard in the United States, yet only half of states have laws preventing electricity shutoffs when temperatures climb to dangerous levels. Our new fact sheet examines statewide laws and policies that suspend utility disconnections during extreme heat, breaking down the thresholds that trigger protections, who's eligible, and which states offer repayment or reconnection support.



State Fentanyl Penalty Enhancements: A Comprehensive Legal Review

States often have complex laws penalizing controlled substance possession, distribution, sale, manufacture, trafficking, and similar actions. Frequently, penalties for violations of these laws are dependent upon which substance is involved and the weight or amount of the substance in question. Many states have recently enacted laws that provide for higher penalties or lower thresholds to trigger penalties for fentanyl than other drugs. This resource identifies all laws that impose criminal penalties for the possession, distribution, or trafficking of controlled substances generally and fentanyl specifically that were in effect as of July 1, 2025. The table notes the characteristics of all laws that impose more stringent

Webinar



Public Health In Pursuit of Voting Rights for All

August 27, 2026 | 12:30 – 2:00 p.m. CT

Attend this webinar to hear from the Southern Poverty Law Center and Institute for Responsive Government about voting rights and public health. The Southern Poverty Law Center will unpack what the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Louisiana v. Callais* means for voting rights, the public's health, and public health. Speakers will discuss the connections between health and democracy—for individuals, communities, and the public health system—and identify ways for public health to join the voting rights movement to increase civic and voter participation.

Worth Sharing

Driving Time, Distance, and Cost to Access Syringe Services Programs in the US

Authors: *Spruha Joshi, PhD, MPH; Mengni Jing, MPH; Katherine Wheeler-Martin, MPH; Pooja Shah, BS; [Corey S. Davis, JD, MSPH](#); Charles J. DiMaggio, PhD; Magdalena Cerdá, DrPH*

Syringe services programs (SSPs) are evidence-based interventions that reduce bloodborne infections and injection-related harms among people who inject drugs, yet access remains limited and geographically uneven across the U.S. This cross-sectional study of travel burden to SSPs found substantial geographic and financial barriers to accessing SSPs across the U.S., particularly in nonmetropolitan areas. Targeting new SSPs to areas with the greatest travel burden could improve utilization and reduce drug-related morbidity.

Collaborative for Transformative Public Health

The Collaborative for Transformative Public Health has been funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to explore how governmental public health can play a stronger role in advancing health equity and justice by addressing structural racism. They are interested in how public health can build and sustain trust with local communities in the U.S. and U.S. territories – a challenging thing given the current climate. Their current project asks what it looks like for governmental public health to partner with local communities to actively disrupt structural racism? They are especially interested in hearing from community members, community organizers, and health department staff across all levels of leadership.

If you are interested in sharing your experiences, [please complete this short form to determine eligibility for an interview](#).

NALBOH 2026 Annual Conference

October 12-14, 2026, San Antonio, Texas

Boards of health play a vital role in protecting and improving community health. The National Association of Local Boards of Health (NALBOH) conference is designed to inspire and support both current and future board members by providing practical governance strategies, leadership development, and real-world examples that strengthen board effectiveness. Attendees will include new and experienced board members, community leaders interested in board service, and public health professionals who support boards of health. Sessions will aim to build governance capacity, foster meaningful board engagement, and provide actionable insights that participants can bring back to their communities.

Tell Us What You're Working On.

We're Ready to Help.

REQUEST
ASSISTANCE

Network attorneys can provide consultation and guidance to:

- Identify the ways in which laws and policies may or may not impact a particular project or community; or the potential impact on different populations within a community.
- Provide examples of and compare public health laws or policy strategies from other jurisdictions.
- Analyze the legal authority to implement a policy or law, or reforms.
- Apply equity tools to laws and policies.

Thank you!

Your interest in the work of the Network is important. Together, we can advance law as a tool to improve public health. **Please forward the Network Report and encourage others to [join the Network!](#)**

The Network for Public Health Law provides information and technical assistance on issues related to public health. The legal information and assistance provided in this document does not constitute legal advice or legal representation. For legal advice, readers should consult a lawyer in their state.



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