

Kentucky Department  
for Public Health

# State Health Improvement Plan

## Executive Summary

2024-  
2028

Our mission is to improve the health  
and safety of people in Kentucky through  
prevention, promotion and protection.



**Kentucky Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.



Adopted: 08/20/2024

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## Letter from the Commissioner



The Kentucky Department for Public Health (KDPH), in partnership with public and private sector partners, is excited to share the 2024 –2028 Kentucky State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP). This SHIP is the culmination of a data-driven, deliberative process and provides a roadmap to support healthier people and healthier communities throughout the Commonwealth. We are grateful for the many people who have contributed to this project, and we look forward to our collaborative efforts to bring this plan to fruition in the years ahead.

We also invite you to visit the KDPH’s [website](#) or follow us on social media to learn more about our nearly 150 programs promoting healthier Kentuckians. For additional information on an even wider array of services and supports for our commonwealth, please visit the Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS) [website](#).

Wishing you good health,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steven J. Stack, MD, MBA". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Steven J. Stack, MD, MBA

Commissioner

## Partners

- Cabinet for Health and Family Services
- Federal, State, and Local Government Representatives
- Nonprofit Organizations
- Academia
- Healthcare Systems
- Healthcare Advocates
- Faith-based Organizations
- Others

## About the SHIP

A state health improvement plan (SHIP) is developed to identify statewide public health priorities and a description of how the health department and community partners will work together to improve the health of the population. A comprehensive SHIP is used to set priorities, identify and direct resources, and implement projects, programs, and policies. The Kentucky 2024-2028 SHIP was developed using data compiled by the KDPH and partners in the 2023 Kentucky State Health Assessment. The plan is the culmination of many collaborative gatherings reviewing and supplementing data, identifying community assets, and providing leadership, direction, and oversight within a state to address health improvement, strengthen the public health infrastructure and engage system partners in contributing to planning, implementation, and evaluation.

A SHIP provides information on health status, system capacity and resources, health improvement policy changes, health and system priorities, measurable objectives and outcomes, implementation plans, and evaluation measures, all within established time frames. A SHIP identifies priorities specific to the needs of the state and considers the resources available to meet those needs. When developed with these characteristics, and if adhered to, a SHIP can improve the health of a state's population [ASTHO State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP) Guidance and Resources, [ASTHOSHIPGuidance.pdf \(ky.gov\)](#)].

## KY State Health Improvement Plan 2024-2028 Priorities

The KDPH convened more than 100 public health partners and local health department leaders in September and October 2023 to discuss the health status of Kentucky, identify five public health priorities, and engage partners to participate in workgroups to create a comprehensive plan. Partners self-selected which priority area(s) they would participate in based on interest, expertise, and resources they could contribute to the process. Continued work was carried out via virtual meetings with one KDPH staff and one external partner serving as co-chairs for each of the five priority area workgroups. More than 200 individuals participated in workgroup meetings consistently over seven months. The



workgroups utilized a number of quality improvement models to guide the SHIP development process, including Plan Do Study Act, Appreciative Inquiry, and SMARTIE goals.

For each of the five priority areas, workgroups identified goals, objectives, and corresponding activities using the SMARTIE system of goal setting: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Inclusive and Equitable. Workgroups identified responsible organizations or drivers for each objective and activity, understanding that the SHIP is a state plan, not solely a public health plan. Workgroups finalized their goal recommendations in May 2024 and determined plans for workgroup follow-up. A summary of the priority areas and their overarching goals are below.

- **Access to Care:** Improve workforce development and network adequacy and improve standardization of provider data collection, reporting, and transparency.
- **Mental Health:** Improving the mental health of Kentucky children and adults is a new priority for the 2024-2028 SHIP and addresses “adverse childhood events” impact on mental health throughout the lifespan.
- **Smoking, Vaping and Tobacco:** Engage with healthcare organizations and multi-sectored partnerships to expand evidence-based tobacco control policies and translate evidence to practice.
- **Nutrition:** Increase consumption of fruits and vegetables through expansion of produce prescription voucher programs, maintaining or increasing enrollment and use of food assistance programs, and increasing healthy food access.
- **Drug Use:** Addresses prevention, harm reduction, treatment, and recovery.

The full SHIP with detailed goals, objectives, and activities is accessible by visiting:

[2024-2028 Kentucky State Health Improvement Plan](#)

[2023 State Health Assessment](#)

## Kentucky Health Data

