

MPHA 2016 Election Candidate Questions

Most of us will not have a chance to ask the presidential candidates the questions that are most pressing to us as public health professionals and advocates. Luckily, we have greater access to the candidates for local offices that have a tremendous impact on our lives, health, and safety. We hope you use some of the questions below if you attend a Town Hall meeting, or even when a candidate shows up at your door.

1. 84% of Minnesotans support closing background check loopholes for websites and gun showsⁱ. *What will you do to assure this basic protection from gun violence?*
2. Due to climate change, extreme weather events have become even more frequent and precipitation patterns have become even predictable. Already these climate changes are impacting Minnesota's agricultural and industrial economies, natural resources, public infrastructure and population healthⁱⁱ. The climate system responds very quickly to changes in methane emissions; reducing methane emissions now will significantly slow the rate of global warming over the coming decadesⁱⁱⁱ. *What will you do to reduce the methane and carbon emissions that are causing global warming?*
3. As you may know, the demographics of this country and Minnesota will change dramatically over the next two decades. The communities that will grow rapidly in MN (communities of color and American Indian Nations) are also the communities that have the highest disparities in the nation. If these disparities are not addressed now they will grow along with the communities. *How would you propose to address these disparities and inequities before these communities become equal to or great than the general population in MN?*
4. In Minnesota, 14% of children ages 10 to 17 are obese^{iv}. Medical expenses due to obesity were estimated to be \$2.8 billion in 2009 in the state^v. The Statewide Health Improvement Program was created in 2010 to support local community strategies to reduce obesity and tobacco use, as these are the two leading risk factors for chronic disease, such as heart disease, cancer, and diabetes. Through its funded local strategies, SHIP is helping to prevent a rise in adult and childhood obesity and lower the rate of tobacco use in Minnesota. *If elected to the Minnesota Legislature, will you support continued funding for the Statewide Health Improvement Program of \$35 million per biennium?*
5. Hundreds of thousands of Minnesotans currently live in areas where they have limited or no access to healthy foods such as fruits and vegetables, dairy, whole grains, and lean meats and poultry. More than 340,000 Minnesotans face both distance and income as a barrier to obtaining healthy, affordable food^{vi}. *If elected to the Minnesota Legislature, will you support annual funding of \$10 million for the [Good Food Access Fund](#) to expand access to fresh and nutritious foods in communities across Minnesota that lack access to grocery stores and other sources of healthy foods?*
6. Leading health organizations such as the American Heart Association and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recommend that children have at least 60 minutes of physical activity each day. Minnesota children are falling far short of that goal. According to the latest Minnesota Student Survey, less than half of students in grades 5, 8, 9, and 11 reported having had 60 minutes of physical activity in five or more days of the last week^{vii}. *If elected to the Minnesota Legislature, will you support opportunities for children to get more physical activity through expanded state funding for [Minnesota's Safe Routes to School program](#) (opportunities for children to safely walk and bike to school) and community-wide walking and bicycling infrastructure?*

ⁱ www.publicpolicypolling.com/pdf/.../PPP_Release_MN_80615.pdf

ⁱⁱ Minnesota Climate and Health Profile Report. <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/climatechange/docs/mnprofile2015.pdf>.

ⁱⁱⁱ Methane Emissions: the greenhouse gas footprint of natural gas. http://www.eeb.cornell.edu/howarth/summaries_CH4_2016.php

^{iv} Source: fasinfat.org/nsch2011 via F as in Fat, a project of the Trust for American's Health and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, <http://fasinfat.org/states/mn/>.

^v Trogon, J. et al. State- and Payer-Specific Estimates of Annual Medical Expenditures Attributable to Obesity. Obesity (2011).

^{vi} The Federal Reserve of Minneapolis and Wilder Research, Healthy Food Access - Landscape in Minnesota and Lessons Learned From Healthy Food Financing Initiatives, Summary (April 2016) <http://www.wilder.org/Wilder-Research/Publications/Studies/Healthy%20Food%20Access/Healthy%20Food%20Access%20-%20Landscape%20in%20Minnesota%20and%20Lessons%20Learned%20From%20Healthy%20Food%20Financing%20Initiatives,%20Summary.pdf>

^{vii} Minnesota Student Survey Interagency Team, 2013 Minnesota Student Survey Statewide Tables, Physical Activity Table 21, Fall 2013, <http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/StuSuc/SafeSch/MNStudentSurvey/>.