



MPHA 2018 Election Candidate Questions

Candidates for local and statewide 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.

Some general terms and concepts for educating candidates:

Public Health: Public health promotes and protects the health of people and the communities where they live, learn, work and play. A doctor treats people who are sick, public health professionals try to prevent people from getting sick or injured in the first placeⁱ.

Health Equity: Health Equity means everyone has a fair and just opportunity to be healthierⁱⁱ. Or the attainment of the highest level of health for all peopleⁱⁱⁱ.

Social and Physical Determinants of Health: Physical determinants of health include green space, buildings, sidewalks, bike lanes, housing and community design. Social determinants educational, economic and job opportunities, public safety, social support^{iv}.

1. People physically or socially isolated are at greater risk of abuse, loneliness, depression, and injury. Immigrants and refugees who lack English language skills and cultural knowledge face additional hurdles to belonging. For rural elders the risk of isolation is compounded by distance to family, communities, or needed services. Disability at any age increases a potential for physical and social isolation^v. *What will you do to create a path forward to welcome immigrants and refugees, and reduce isolation among all Minnesotans?*
2. 84% of Minnesotans support closing background check loopholes for websites and gun shows^{vi}. *What will you do to assure this basic protection from gun violence?*
3. Due to climate change, extreme weather events have become even more frequent and precipitation patterns have become less predictable. Already these climate changes are impacting Minnesota's agricultural and industrial economies, natural resources, public infrastructure and population health^{vii}. *Will you support raising Minnesota's Renewable Energy Standard to 50% by 2030 to build on previous success in reaching statewide goals and continue the economic boom in the clean energy sector? Will you oppose efforts to weaken the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (PUC) and the Environmental Quality Board (EQB)?*
4. 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 greater than the general population in MN?*
5. Several towns and cities have enacted ordinances to increase the purchasing age of tobacco to 21 years of age. If Minnesota increases the tobacco age, 30,000 young people would not become smokers over the next 15 years. *Would you support raising the purchasing age of tobacco to 21 years of age?*
6. The Statewide Health Improvement Partnership 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. One of the major funding sources for SHIP is the health care provider tax, which is set to sunset in 2019. *If elected to the Minnesota Legislature, how would you propose continuing funding for the Statewide Health Improvement Partnership?*
7. 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^{viii}. *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 <https://www.apha.org/what-is-public-health>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.rwjf.org/en/library/features/achieving-health-equity.html>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/about/foundation-health-measures/Disparities>

^{iv} <https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/social-determinants-of-health>

^v <http://www.health.state.mn.us/healthymnpartnership/docs/2017MNSStatewideHealthAssessment.pdf>

^{vi} www.publicpolicy.com/polling/pdf/PPP_Release_MN_80615.pdf

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

^{viii} 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/>.