



## 2021 UPHA Legislative Wrap-Up

### **UPHA supported and spoke in favor of the following public health bills:**

[HCR 6 Concurrent Resolution Recognizing Covid-19 Efforts](#). UPHA supported this joint resolution which recognizes the countless public health professionals who have spent the last year creating and promoting accurate information about the spread of COVID-19 and how to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 for Utah residents. The list of public health professionals mentioned in the resolution included the state epidemiologist; state and local health department directors; local epidemiologists; contact tracers; data analysts; web designers; communication specialists; and public information officers. This resolution passed.

[HJR 13: Joint Resolution Declaring Racism a Moral and Public Health Crisis](#). This bill would express the Legislature's commitment to abolish state policies that are discriminatory and identify actions that can be taken to help mitigate impacts of past discriminatory policies. UPHA in partnership with USOPHE advocated in support of this bill, which did not pass.

Media Coverage: [UPHA Press Release](#), [KUER AM 2/23/2021 News Brief](#), [UPHA Board Deseret News 3/3/2021 Op Ed](#).

[HB 194 Diabetes Prevention Program](#). This bill would have allowed for a three-year Medicaid pilot program to provide coverage of the National Diabetes Prevention Program (National DPP) for Medicaid beneficiaries who meet enrollment criteria. The National DPP is an evidence-based lifestyle change program for individuals diagnosed with prediabetes and is shown to reduce the risk of developing type 2 diabetes by 58%. UPHA advocated in support of this bill which included asking for money to fund the program. Ultimately the bill did not get funded, so it could not move forward to pass. UPHA will work with other partners try to get this bill placed on the priority funding list during the 2022 Utah Legislative Session.

### **UPHA briefed policy makers about potential concerns with the following bills:**

[HB 365 State Agency Realignment](#). This bill merges to consolidate the Utah Department of Health with the Utah Department of Human Services to begin the process to create one state agency the Utah Department of Health and Human Services by July 1, 2022. UPHA was very vocal about concerns with this bill, meeting with policy makers to request the creation of a public health commissioner which the Governor's Office is considering. The bill passed and UPHA hopes to participate in future stakeholder discussions related to the transition process this year.



**UPHA opposed and spoke against the following bills:**

[Fourth Sub. HB 294 Pandemic Emergency Powers Amendments](#). Called the “endgame” bill, this bill lifts some of the proven COVID-19 protocol restrictions, by April 10, 2021, terminating all public health orders effective July 1, 2021. The bill preserves some local authority for health districts and schools to take certain health and safety measures in certain circumstances. UPHA collaborated with USOPHE to speak against the bill and ask for considerations included in the final version of the bill. The bill passed.

Media Coverage: [Deseret News 3/1](#), [KSL 3/2](#), [USOPHE mention in Salt Lake Tribune 3/2](#).

[Third Sub. SB 195 Emergency Response Amendments](#) and Both bills could undermine public health’s ability to implement safety measures in a future public health emergency. UPHA worked in tandem with USOPHE and some other organizations to speak against the bill. The final version of the bill which passed is better than the original bill.

[H.B. 344 Program Eligibility Amendments](#) is a bill that would have created additional barriers to reapplying for Medicaid, including requests for additional administration to track down and verify Medicaid applicant documentation. In addition it limits and reduces presumptive eligibility for hospitals and for people with disabilities. It creates additional barriers for people requesting SNAP benefits as well. This was drafted after model legislation that several other states have run but haven't passed as the requirements are not compliant with CMS guidelines. UPHA’s lobbyist Carrie Butler spoke out against this bill in the 2/23/21 House Health & Human Services Committee, where the bill was held and returned to House rules to die.

[Fourth Sub. HB 117 Vaccine Reporting Requirements](#) - did not pass.

[First Sub. SB 134 Tobacco Regulation Amendments](#) - did not pass.

Lastly, please consider participating with the UPHA Advocacy/Policy Unit by running for a board position, participating in the local policy making process, or assisting UPHA to prepare for the 2022 Legislative Session. Email [policy@upha.org](mailto:policy@upha.org) for details.