

Alabama

2013 Public Policy Agenda

Building healthier lives, free of cardiovascular diseases and stroke

The American Heart Association / American Stroke Association supports and advocates for public policies that will help improve the cardiovascular health of all Americans by 20 percent while reducing deaths by coronary heart disease and stroke by 20 percent by 2020.

Adopt Mandatory Pulse Oximetry Screening for Alabama Newborns – Require birthing facilities in Alabama to perform pulse oximetry screenings on all Alabama newborns. Congenital heart defects are the No. 1 killer of infants with birth defects. Pulse oximetry is a non-invasive test that is effective at detecting critical, life-threatening congenital heart defects which otherwise go undetected by current screening methods.

Foster Obesity Reduction & Prevention through Shared Use – Increasing opportunities for physical activity and play in Alabama communities through shared use agreements between schools and local governments or non-profits, can help fight childhood obesity. To promote this strategy it is important to clarify liability rules regarding the use of school owned recreational facilities by other groups for the purpose of physical activity. Liability for property damage and injury should be placed on the user. The school should not be held liable.

Support Tobacco Prevention & Cessation - Support an increase in the tobacco excise tax in Alabama by \$1.00 and seek opportunities to allocate a portion of revenues generated to tobacco control, prevention and cessation programs. Significant increases in tobacco taxes are a health win that reduces tobacco use, saves lives, raises revenue for cash-strapped states, lowers health care costs and is a political win because they are popular with voters. Support restoration of state funding put toward tobacco prevention and cessation. Cuts to prevention programs stifle efforts to reduce tobacco use and the state suffers from higher levels of smoking and more smoking-caused deaths, disease and costs.

Promote Comprehensive Smokefree Policies – Promote the adoption of comprehensive statewide and local smokefree policies in all workplaces including restaurants and bars. Adopting strong smokefree policies are the only effective way to completely eliminate the health threat of exposure to secondhand smoke.

Promote Primary Stroke Centers to Improve Stroke Care – Promote certification of hospitals to be Primary Stroke Centers based on Joint Commission certification or an equivalent process. A Primary Stroke Center is a hospital equipped to quickly diagnose, treat and provide early rehabilitation to stroke patients. These facilities are the linchpin of any stroke system of care.

Create a Stroke Registry to Improve Stroke Care - Support development of a centralized, statewide stroke registry that uses Get with the Guidelines- Stroke as the data registry platform and/or aligns with the evidence-based stroke measures approved by the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association. Collection of pertinent data drives quality improvement and helps ensure the proper steps are taken to treat stroke patients.