

Thank you, Assembly and Senate Health Committee members, for your thoughtful questions to NYSACHO during the joint budget hearing on 2/27. Here are the answers to your questions in writing. We are grateful for your leadership and happy to expand on any additional questions you may have at this time.

Regarding Cannabis Inspections:

- The state set up the office of cannabis management (OCM) to provide regulatory inspection, enforcement and oversight of cannabis products. We feel that OCM is the appropriate regulatory agency to do this work in communities where illicit sales and licensed retailers are established. However, because legalizing adult use cannabis will have an impact on public health, local health departments will play a role in prevention and education activities. For example, local health departments will want to track unintentional exposures to cannabis products in children and may need to educate on safer storage of these products, warn against driving under the influence, etc. Local health departments are not interested in taking on a regulatory role.

Proposal to reduce FMAP \$397 million for mental health services:

- Any reduction to FMAP will impact county budgets, placing local health departments on the chopping block for cuts to public health programming. This cut will have a disastrous impact on public health services and mental health services and the people employed by these local agencies who do the work. NYSACHO strongly supports rejecting the FMAP proposal to ensure that we can continue doing the work we are charged to do, protect public health and prevent the existence of health disparities.

Lead Prevention Funding and Breakdown of \$58.1M:

- Please see supplemental PDF table and visit [Lead Prevention Advocacy - NYSACHO](#) for more information on how local health departments support children and families who are exposed to lead.

Regarding Hookah being included in the Tobacco Control Proposal:

- Flavored hookah is included in the list of tobacco products that would be banned from sales in NYS.
- Hookah is commonly, but incorrectly perceived as less harmful than cigarette smoking. The truth is, hookah smoke contains levels of volatile organic compounds, ultra-fine particles (including some heavy metals), nicotine and carbon monoxide that are similar to or exceed what's in cigarette smoke (American Heart Association).
- Regarding hookah being a cultural practice, prior to the 1990's shisha was a dry, non flavored tobacco. The use of this version of shisha dates back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century in India and Persia (modern-day Iran). Traditional non flavored hookah or non tobacco flavored hookah would not be prohibited (American Heart Association).
- NYSACHO strongly supports the provisions included in the Governor's tobacco control package as a means to saving the lives of our youth, LGBTQ+ and BIPOC communities and from being further addicted to tobacco products. We encourage the Senate and Assembly to take action by including these proposals in their one-house budgets.