

ASPPH Advocacy Initiatives in 2018 (Updated on December 18, 2018)

December 11, 2018: ASPPH and eleven other groups submitted joint [comments](#) to the EPA regarding the Draft Integrated Science Assessment for Particulate Matter (ISA). The groups said, “Our organizations consider the review of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for particulate matter (PM) to be a top priority concern for the protection of public health, a position reinforced by the escalating evidence of its widespread harm. Particulate matter air pollution poses risks of serious health effects, including premature death, and the evidence compiled in this ISA documents greater risks than had previously been recognized.”

December 10, 2018: ASPPH [wrote](#) to key Congressional leaders endorsing H.R. 1318, the Preventing Maternal Deaths Act. The bill would, among other provisions, direct the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to establish a grant program to states for the purpose of reviewing pregnancy-related and pregnancy-associated deaths (maternal deaths) and establishing and sustaining a maternal mortality review committee to review relevant information.

December 8, 2018: ASPPH on December 7 submitted formal [comments](#) strongly opposing the Department of Homeland Security’s (DHS) Proposed Rule on the inadmissibility of immigrants on “public charge” grounds. DHS published the [proposal](#) in the *Federal Register* on October 10, 2018. The letter said, “ASPPH opposes the proposed rule as it would have profound and negative consequences on the health of the many immigrant families that would be affected by limiting their access to critical and life-saving health and wellness services. As such, this proposal also will negatively affect the health and wellness of entire communities. We urge you to withdraw the rule in its entirety and that long-standing immigration policies remain in effect.”

December 7, 2018: ASPPH joined other members of the Public Service Loan Repayment Coalition in writing to all new members of the House of Representatives calling for support of the program and highlighting the current management challenges bedeviling the program.

December 6, 2018: ASPPH and a dozen other organizations issued a [statement](#) decrying an [announcement](#) by the Acting Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) of a proposed rule to dramatically weaken the Carbon Pollution Standards for New, Modified and Reconstructed Power Plants, which are protections against carbon pollution that have been in effect since 2015. ASPPH said, “This latest attempt from the Administration to give industry a license to pollute is irresponsible and illogical from both a health and economic perspective. We strongly oppose this proposal, which is a major threat to the health of all Americans, particularly those most vulnerable.”

November 29, 2018: ASPPH joined with a dozen other organizations in sending a [letter](#) to key appropriations committee leaders urging them to fully fund the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and oppose all policy riders – especially those that would block, weaken, or delay critical clean air and public health protections.

November 26, 2018: ASPPH joined with more than 20 other organizations in a [letter](#) to the Office of the United States Trade Representative calling for the US to ensure that any trade agreement with Japan provide protections necessary to protect their citizens from the death and disease caused by tobacco products. Specifically, the letter calls for any agreement to ensure that the US and Japan not face the threat of investor litigation from the tobacco industry.

November 14, 2018: ASPPH and almost 20 other organizations sent a [letter](#) to Acting EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler calling on him “to abandon the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s current plans to reconsider limits on mercury and other air toxics from power plants.”

November 14, 2018: ASPPH and more than 80 other organizations sent a [letter](#) to Congressional leaders urging them to advance legislation during the lame duck session to reduce maternal mortality in the United States. The legislation ([H.R. 1318/S. 1112](#)) has already cleared the committees of jurisdiction in both the House and Senate.

October 31, 2018: ASPPH and a dozen other associations submitted joint [comments](#) on proposals by the Environmental Protection Agency on “Emission Guidelines for Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Existing Electric Utility Generating Units” and “Revisions to Emission Guideline Implementing Regulations; Revisions to New Source Review Program.” The detailed comment letter urges EPA to withdraw their proposals.

October 26, 2018: ASPPH sponsored a [webinar](#), “Academic Public Health and the Family Immigration Crisis.” The webinar featured the lead immigration counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union, physicians and child development experts, higher education advocates involved in immigration issues, and the director of a child advocacy legal clinic. [Trump Administration representatives were invited but declined to participate.]

October 23, 2018: ASPPH issued a [statement](#), along with various other groups and individuals, expressing concern about the EPA’s proposal to weaken health protections from coal plant emissions and calling on President Trump and the EPA to reconsider and rescind the Affordable Clean Energy (ACE) Rule, and to maintain critical health-protective Mercury and Air Toxics Standards (MATS) safeguards for coal plants.

October 19, 2018: ASPPH and other members of the coalition working to preserve the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) Program [wrote](#) to Secretary DeVos expressing alarm about rejection rate data presented by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) and asking DeVos to detail how the Department plans to implement the GAO’s recommendation. The groups also asked “the Department to provide a detailed breakdown of the reasons so many applicants failed to qualify for PSLF so we can be of greater assistance in supporting efforts to improve

October 16, 2018: ASPPH joined several hundred other organizations and educational institutions in sending a thank you [letter](#) to Congressional leaders for the fiscal year 2019 funding levels they provided

to the NIH and other research agencies.

October 4, 2018: ASPPH joined more than 100 other organizations in sending a [letter](#) to HHS Secretary Alex Azar saying we are “deeply concerned that funding to care for immigrant children—those forcibly separated from their parents at the border, and those detained in custody for extended periods of time—as a direct result of the administration’s immigration policies, is being drawn directly from money appropriated in fiscal year 2018 for public health and medical research” The groups called on the Administration to request supplemental funding from Congress to ensure the health and wellbeing of children and families in the Department’s care.”

September 27, 2018: ASPPH and two dozen other organizations submitted letter [testimony](#) to the Health Subcommittee of the House Energy and Commerce Committee in support of a new discussion draft of H.R. 1318, the Preventing Maternal Deaths Act (which mirrors S. 1112, the Maternal Health Accountability Act). The testimony voiced strong support for the work of state maternal mortality review committees (MMRCs), funded by the CDC. MMRCs are multidisciplinary groups of local experts in maternal, infant, and public health that examine cases of maternal death.

September 18, 2018: ASPPH and other members of the Health Air Coalition submitted a formal [request](#) to the Environmental Protection Agency asking them to extend the comment deadline for at least 60 additional days on the proposed Affordable Clean Energy (ACE) rule. We further requested that EPA hold at least three additional public hearings on the proposal.

September 13, 2018: ASPPH and other members of the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Coalition submitted [comments](#) on a Department of Education rulemaking on the application process related to the Temporary Expanded Public Service Loan Forgiveness (TEPSLF) program, created by Congress to offer relief for borrowers enrolled in nonqualifying repayment plans.

September 11, 2018: ASPPH and 50 partner organizations [wrote](#) to Congressional leaders urging that all tobacco policy riders be stricken from the FY 2019 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, including a provision that would weaken FDA oversight of tobacco products, including e-cigarettes and cigars.

September 7, 2018: ASPPH joined more than 170 other organizations in writing a [letter](#) to Congressional appropriators request that they fund the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) in fiscal year 2019 at a level equal to or higher than the House and Senate marks of \$334 million.

September 6, 2018: ASPPH and others wrote a [letter](#) to Congressional leaders expressing support for increased funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) National Center for Environmental Health (NCEH) in the FY 2019 Labor, HHS, Education appropriations bill.

August 31, 2018: ASPPH Board Chair Dr. Donna Petersen wrote a [letter](#) to the editor of the *New York Times* opposing the Department of Justice’s threat to shut down state-sanctioned safe-injection sites. The letter reviewed the research on the success of such harm reduction strategies.

August 30, 2018: ASPPH [wrote](#) to Mrs. Cindy McCain expressing the sympathies of our members on the death of Senator John McCain and highlighting his initiatives advancing public health.

August 15, 2018: ASPPH and others submitted formal [comments](#) to the Environmental Protection Agency in opposition to the proposed rule, “Strengthening Transparency in Regulatory Science.”

August 6, 2018: Dr. Michael Eriksen and Tony Mazzaschi hosted an ASPPH Presents [Webinar](#), “Policy, Advocacy, and the Missions of Academic Public Health.”

August 1, 2018: ASPPH sent a [letter](#) to key appropriations and authorization committee chairs opposing the Trump Administration’s proposed cuts in the number of slots allocated to the US Public Health Service Commissioned Corps. The Association endorsed the creation of a “reserve cops” and also called for the creation of a dedicated funding line for the Corps.

July 25, 2018: ASPPH released, “Resources to Help Students Register and Vote,” a [collection of links and other bipartisan resources](#) to promote civic participation.

July 24, 2018: ASPPH sponsored an “Advocacy Skill-Building Workshop” in Fort Lauderdale, Florida before the start of the annual ASPPH Leadership Retreat. The session was led by Bradford Fitch, President & CEO, Congressional Management Foundation.

July 16, 2018: ASPPH and others released a [joint statement](#) in opposition to the EPA’s proposed rule, “Strengthening Transparency in Regulatory Science.” The statement was released the day before the public hearing on the proposed rule.

July 13, 2018: ASPPH and others sent a community [letter](#) to HHS Secretary Azar protesting U.S. opposition to a breastfeeding resolution at the World Health Assembly.

July 9, 2018: ASPPH [letter](#) to HHS Secretary Azar protesting U.S. opposition to a breastfeeding resolution at the World Health Assembly. In a [letter](#) to ASPPH dated October 26, 2018, G. Garrett Grigsby, director of the HHS Office of Global Affairs, responded on behalf of Secretary Azar. Mr. Grigsby said that “HHS unequivocally supports breastfeeding as scientifically proven to be one of the most important and effective ways to promote child health and development.” While noting US objections to the initial resolution because it placed “unnecessary hurdles for families seeking to provide nutrition to their children and limiting access to information,” he noted that the US eventually supported a revised resolution. The “hurdles” that Mr. Grigsby refers to relate to a ban on deceptive marketing practices by formula manufacturers and marketers.

June 21, 2018: ASPPH and five other public health associations sent a [letter](#) to the HHS and DHS Secretaries opposing the migrant family separation policy.

June 18, 2018: ASPPH and others sent a [letter](#) to Senators Marco Rubio (R-FL) and Orrin Hatch (R-UT) opposing the use of the Prevention and Public Health Fund as an offset to the Puerto Rico Economic Empowerment Act.

June 15, 2018: ASPPH strongly protested the Administration's program of separating migrant families in a [letter](#) to Donald Trump.

June 12, 2018: A [letter](#) signed by more than 65 public health deans and program directors on the importance of the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) Program was distributed to all congressional offices.

June 5, 2018: ASPPH sponsored a [webinar](#) on, "Opioid Litigation and a Possible Master Settlement Agreement."

May 29, 2018: ASPPH and others [wrote](#) the Appropriations Committees in calling on Congress "to recognize the essential role of publicly funded family planning and sexual health care services by funding Title X at \$327 million in FY 2019."

May 24, 2018: ASPPH and others [wrote](#) the leadership of the House and Senate Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations Subcommittees urging them to fully fund the CDC Office of Smoking and Health. The Trump Administration proposed killing the office in its FY 2019 budget submission.

May 23, 2018: ASPPH and others [wrote](#) Senate leaders to oppose riders added to the FY 2019 Agriculture appropriations bill by the House Appropriations Committee that would limit the authority that Congress granted the FDA under the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act.

May 22, 2018: ASPPH and other [wrote](#) to all Members of Congress opposing efforts to eliminate the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program.

May 21, 2018: ASPPH and others [wrote](#) to FDA Commissioner Dr. Scott Gottlieb in strong support of the FDA initiative "to move toward a product standard to reduce the nicotine level in cigarettes to non-addictive or minimally addictive levels."

May 7, 2018: ASPPH endorsed the [recommendation](#) of the Ad Hoc Group for Medical Research Funding to provide "at least \$39.3 billion for the NIH, including funds provided to the agency through the 21st Century Cures Act for targeted initiatives." The recommendation was then distributed to all members of the House and Senate.

May 4, 2018: ASPPH and others [wrote](#) members of the House Agricultural Appropriations Subcommittee opposing an amendment to the FY 2019 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill that would have reduced the FDA's tobacco oversight authority.

April 27, 2018: ASPPH and others [wrote](#) members of Congress asking them "to provide \$50 million in funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to conduct public health research into firearm morbidity and mortality prevention."

April 11, 2018: ASPPH and other members of the Friends of HRSA [wrote](#) to Congress urging them to provide \$8.56 billion for discretionary Health Resources and Services Administration programs in the FY 2019 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies appropriations bill.

April 9, 2018: ASPPH and other members of the CDC Coalition [wrote](#) Congress urging them to provide \$8.445 billion for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's programs in the FY 2019 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

April 6, 2018: The ASPPH leadership sent [thank you notes](#) to the chairs and ranking members of the House and Senate Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations Subcommittees thanking them on behalf of the ASPPH membership for providing the NIH, CDC, and other critical research and public health accounts with significant funding increases as part of the FY 2018 omnibus appropriations bill.

April 5, 2018: ASPPH sponsored a webinar by the Congressional Management Foundation to enhance advocacy skills. The webinar was titled, "New Social Media Research Revealed!"

April 3, 2018: ASPPH and others [wrote](#) Congress supporting funding for the Title V Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Services Block Grant program in the FY2019 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education & Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

March 27, 2018: ASPPH and others filed an [amicus brief](#) urging the Supreme Court to reinstate the nationwide injunction against the Trump Administration [Proclamation 9645](#) that indefinitely bars individuals from entering the United States on the basis of their nationality.

March 27, 2018: ASPPH and other members of the Friends of AHRQ sent [letters](#) to Congressional leaders requesting \$454 million for FY19 for the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ).

March 26, 2018: ASPPH [wrote](#) to Dr. Robert Redfield congratulating him on his appointment as Director of the CDC.

March 19, 2018: ASPPH organized and wrote a [letter](#) to appropriators signed by various associations in support of funding the Public Health Training Centers and the Preventive Medicine Residency Programs.

February 23, 2018: ASPPH and others [wrote](#) to the members of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor & Pensions commenting on draft legislation to reauthorize the Higher Education Act and urging the panel to preserve the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program.

February 22, 2018: ASPPH and others sent a [letter](#) to Congress urging that they "find a bipartisan path forward for comprehensive legislative solutions to firearm-related injuries and fatalities."

February 22, 2018: ASPPH sponsored a webinar by the Congressional Management Foundation to enhance advocacy skills. The webinar was titled, "Influencing Staff: What Congress' Policy Advisers Want in Briefing Materials."

February 16, 2018: ASPPH posted a statement on Parkland School shooting, highlighting the need to fund gun violence research at the CDC.

February 2, 2018: ASPPH [wrote](#) to HHS Secretary Alex Azar urging the Trump Administration to consider appointing CDC Acting Director Dr. Anne Schuchat to the position on a permanent basis.

January 25, 2018: ASPPH sponsored a webinar by the Congressional Management Foundation to enhance advocacy skills. The webinar was titled, "Before, During, and After Meetings with Congress."

January 24, 2018: ASPPH and others [wrote](#) to members of the House and the Senate urging them "to help ensure adequate funding for programs funded through annual appropriations, by continuing the bipartisan practice of providing relief from sequestration budget cuts and opposing any new efforts to cut these programs more deeply."

January 19, 2018: ASPPH provided formal [comments](#) on the draft proposed strategic plan (2019-2023) of the NIH Office of Disease Prevention.

January 18, 2018: ASPPH and others [wrote](#) to Congressional leaders "to express our serious concern about the most recent continuing resolution, which cut \$750 million from the Prevention and Public Health Fund (Prevention Fund) and will put Americans at greater risk for illnesses, injuries and preventable deaths."

January 17, 2018: ASPPH and others [wrote](#) to executives of Walgreens urging the firm "to discontinue its practice of selling of tobacco consumer products." Walgreen is the largest drug store chain in the country. The second largest chain, CVS, stopped selling tobacco products in 2014.

January 8, 2018: ASPPH and others [wrote](#) to House and Senate appropriators asking "that you fund the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) at a level equal to or higher than the Senate mark of \$324 million."