ASPPH Advocacy Initiatives in 2019

December 19, 2019: ASPPH and several other public health organizations responded to a request for information from the HHS chief information officer related to PreventionX, which is focused on effective chronic disease prevention in the US. The response, which was organized by the Trust for America’s Health, identifies nine thematic areas where there are both barriers and opportunities to the scaling and deployment of effective prevention strategies focused on non-communicable diseases.

December 18, 2019: More than 125 scientific societies and journal publishers, including ASPPH, wrote a letter to the Trump administration urging that it not to move forward with a rumored executive order that would make all papers produced by federally funded research immediately available freely to the public. Currently, a federal policy adopted in 2013, allows a 12-month embargo before journal articles/final accepted manuscripts are mandated to be made public if the research was supported with federal funds.

December 16, 2019: ASPPH and allied organizations filed formal comments to the FDA’s proposed rule to govern the submission and evaluation of applications for the marketing of new tobacco products (PMTAs), principally e-cigarettes. E-cigarette manufacturers will have to file applications by May 2020 in order to keep their products on the market. The letter was organized by the Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids.

December 13, 2019: ASPPH formally endorsed legislation sponsored by Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-IL), the Providing Resources to End the Vaping Epidemic Now for Teenagers (PREVENT) Act. The bipartisan and bicameral bill would create youth vaping prevention programs in schools and provide resources to help teachers and administrators combat skyrocketing youth e-cigarette use.

December 4, 2019: ASPPH and 161 other organization wrote to leaders of the House and Senate urge them to complete work on the fiscal year (FY) 2020 appropriations bills as soon as possible. The organizations warned, “The uncertainty created by short and long-term continuing resolutions (CRs) has severe consequences for science and research.” The letter was organized by the American Society for Microbiology and the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

November 24, 2019: ASPPH and 25 other health organizations submitted an official joint comment letter in opposition to the US Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA’s) proposed amendments to the 2012 and 2016 New Source Performance Standards for the oil and natural gas industry. The organizations wrote, “The proposal would not only increase methane emissions from new sources by hundreds of thousands of tons, but would strip away EPA’s authority to regulate methane from existing oil and gas equipment, which is responsible for the vast majority of emissions from this sector.” The organizations noted, “Reducing emissions of
methane from the oil and gas industry is critical to protecting health from both current and future impacts of climate change.”

November 21, 2019: The Association agreed to be listed as an organization supporting HR 2339, the Reversing the Youth Tobacco Epidemic Act, in a “Dear Colleague” letter being circulated by Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-IL) and Rep. Peter King (R-NY). The message from the Congressmen requests Congressional cosigners of a letter to Donald Trump urging him to finalize a complete regulatory ban on flavored e-cigarettes.

November 19, 2019: ASPPH signed a letter organized by the Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum (APIAHF) and the Association of Asian Pacific Health Organizations (AAPCHO) requesting Congress to take action to restore Medicaid to Compacts of Free Association (COFA) populations living in the US. Over 270 organizations joined in signing the letter.

November 13, 2019: ASPPH formally requested a meeting with officials at the White Office of Management and Budget and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to voice its strong opposition to the proposed EPA regulation to restrict the science it uses to craft its regulations (see below).

November 13, 2019: ASPPH joined more than 50 other associations and education institutions in submitting a statement to the House Science Committee related to its hearing on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) “Strengthening Transparency in Regulatory Science” proposed rule. The organizations said, “We strongly oppose EPA’s efforts to restrict the use of the best available science in its policymaking…When feasible, scientists should strive for appropriate public access to data to maximize utility and trust in the scientific process. However, there are many credible scientific studies where the exposure of raw data to the public is infeasible or would reveal confidential patient or research participant information…If EPA excludes studies because the data cannot be made public, people may be exposed to real harm. The result would be decisions affecting millions based on inadequate information that fails to include well-supported studies by expert scientists. These efforts will not improve the quality of science used by EPA nor allow the agency to fulfill its mandate of protecting human health and the environment.”

November 5, 2019: ASPPH joined 29 other higher education groups in commenting on a Department of Education notice (and related form) for collecting information about gifts and contracts from foreign sources. Under Section 117 of the Higher Education Act, foreign gifts and contracts from foreign sources valued at $250,000 or more are required to be disclosed to the Department. However, the Department has never issued regulations detailing the scope and specifics of the reporting requirement. The 16-page comment letter and attached legal brief, the development of which was led by the American Council on Education, raised numerous concerns with the proposal, which includes expanded information and document
requirements that go far beyond the statutory language. The groups that signed the letter said some of the mandated disclosures appear to be illegal. The legal brief attached to the comment letter highlights a number of legal flaws in the Department’s proposal.

November 4, 2019: ASPPH and other organizational members of the Friend of PCORI Reauthorization in writing Congressional leaders urging them “to finalize a long-term reauthorization of PCORI, maintain its current funding sources, and continue its mandate to conduct comparative clinical effectiveness research (CER).” The authorization of the Patient Centered Outcomes Research Trust Fund was set to expire on September 30 but was extended to November 21, 2019 by the continuing resolution.

November 1, 2019: The ASPPH Task Force on Public Health Interventions to Address the Opioid Crisis released its report and recommendations, “Bringing Science to Bear on the Opioid Crisis.” A related viewpoint by Drs. Cheryl Healton, Robert Pack and Sandro Galea was posted by JAMA the same day. The report provides evidence-based recommendations in the following areas: evidence and epidemiology; anti-stigma and harm reduction; primary prevention; access to medications for opioid use disorder; research and evaluation; regulatory and legislative reforms; and changes in industry business practices. The report has been distributed to all state attorneys general and to more than 1,800 lawyers of record in the 2,600+ federal lawsuits against opioid manufacturers, distributors and retailers.

November 1, 2019: ASPPH joined with more than 170 other members of the Friends of HRSA coalition in writing a letter to members of the House and Senate recommending that they provide a minimum of $7.32 billion for discretionary Health Resources and Services Administration programs in any final FY 2020 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies appropriations bill, the level approved in the House-passed version of the bill. The groups wrote, “HRSA is an essential component of the nation’s health care system, yet the agency’s discretionary budget authority remains far below the funding level needed to effectively address the nation’s health care needs. Additional funding will allow HRSA to fill preventive and primary health care gaps and to build upon the achievements of HRSA’s more than 90 programs and more than 3,000 grantees.”

October 30, 2019: ASPPH endorsed the bipartisan bill, the Cannabidiol and Marihuana Research Expansion Act (S 2032), sponsored by Senator Brian Schatz (D-HI). The bill combines the Schatz-Hatch Marijuana Effective Drug Studies Act (MEDS Act) and the Feinstein-Grassley Cannabidiol Research Expansion Act. The overall goal of the legislation is the development of FDA-approved drugs derived from cannabis and its cannabinoids, which would serve as alternatives to existing opioid treatments.

October 24, 2019: ASPPH joined with 305 other members of the Ad Hoc Group for Medical Research Funding in writing to key House and Senate appropriators urging them to work
quickly to agree to a significant increase in the Labor-HHS allocation, and to provide a robust increase in funding for the National Institutes of Health in FY 2020.

October 23, 2019: ASPPH sent a letter to the director of the National Institutes of Health concerning the recent paper in *Scientific Advances* that found that the African-American/black principal investigator funding gap identified in the 2011 paper by Ginther and colleagues is partially because research at the community and population level has lower success rates than “more fundamental and mechanistic investigations.” ASPPH also highlighted the failure of NIH’s institutes and centers (ICs) to appoint public health experts to their advisory committees. By statute, each NIH advisory committee, including those of the various ICs, must include “…not less than two individuals who are leaders in the fields of public health and the behavioral or social sciences…” Both the House and Senate Appropriations Committees recently have been critical of NIH for not meeting its statutory obligation. In the letter, Dr. Sandro Galea offered the Association’s assistance in identifying highly regarded public health experts who can be considered for open slots on NIH’s advisory panels, based on the specific needs of each IC, to both address the findings of the *Scientific Advances* paper and help NIH meet its statutory obligation.

October 23, 2019: ASPPH and other members of the CDC Coalition sent a letter to House and Senate Appropriations Committee leaders urging a funding level of at least $8.22 billion for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in any final FY 2020 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

October 21, 2019: ASPPH joined with several other organizations in sending a letter to the sponsors endorsing S 2639, the United States Public Health Service Modernization Act of 2019, introduced by Senator Mike Rounds (R-SD) and Doug Jones (D-AL). A companion House bill (HR 4870) was introduced by Cong. Mike Burgess (R-TX). The bill would establish a Ready Reserve Corps within the United States Public Health Service (USPHS) Commissioned Corps “to make certain vital health care jobs are adequately staffed when disasters strike the US.”

October 16, 2019: ASPPH and more than 45 other organizations wrote to the chair and ranking member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee in support of prohibiting menthol cigarettes, which is a key part of the Reversing the Youth Tobacco Epidemic Act (HR 2339). The organizations said, “There is overwhelming scientific evidence that menthol cigarettes have had a profound adverse effect on public health. Removing them from the market would drive down tobacco use and the death and disease it causes, particularly among youth and African-Americans.” The letter was organized by the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids.

October 16, 2019: ASPPH and more than 110 other organizations wrote to members of the House of Representatives to voice “strong support for the Health Equity & Access under the Law (HEAL) for Immigrant Women & Families Act of 2019, in line with our pursuit of securing
comprehensive and affordable access to healthcare for people of all immigration statuses so that immigrant families can live with health and dignity. The HEAL for Immigrant Women and Families Act of 2019 accomplishes this by removing legal and policy barriers to health insurance coverage and thus expanding access to healthcare services, including sexual, reproductive, and maternal health services, for immigrants.”

October 15, 2019: ASPPH and more than 40 other public health associations submitted formal comments to the Food and Drug Administration supportive of their proposed rule to establish new required health warnings for cigarette packages and advertisements, “Tobacco Products; Required Warnings for Cigarette Packages and Advertisements,” (84 FR 42754). The organizations said that the current health warnings on cigarette packs have been unchanged in 35 years and are wholly inadequate as the science base has grown substantially regarding the number of diseases caused by smoking. The groups urged quick action in finalizing the rule, noting that “Given the length of time that the Congressional mandate of graphic health warnings has remained unfulfilled, and the strong support for the proposed warnings in the administrative record, FDA must ensure that a final rule is issued by the March 15, 2020 deadline established by order of the United States District Court for the District of Massachusetts in American Academy of Pediatrics v. FDA, No. 1:16-cv-11985-IT, Dkt. No. 56 (March 5, 2019).”

October 11, 2019: ASPPH presented a webinar on “Managing Compliance Challenges Involving Global Collaborators.” Presenting were Michael Lauer, MD, Deputy Director for Extramural Research, National Institutes of Health; Tobin (Toby) Smith, MA, Vice President for Policy, Association of American Universities; and Valarie H. Bonham, JD, Counsel, Health Care and Life Sciences, Ropes & Gray. The webinar was moderated by Dr. Penny Gordon-Larsen (UNC).

October 7, 2019: ASPPH officially became a “Supporting Organization” of the Congressional Caucus to End the Youth Vaping Epidemic, sponsored and co-chaired by Congressmen Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-IL) and Peter King (R-NY) and Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL).

October 7, 2019: ASPPH and over 50 other organizations wrote to the Secretaries of HHS and DHS, the Director of the CDC, and the Surgeon General, urging “the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to reconsider its decision to not vaccinate families in the custody of US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) against influenza (flu). The deaths of three children in CBP custody from influenza have been deeply troubling and immunizing these families against influenza and other vaccine-preventable diseases would help prevent additional tragedies.”

October 4, 2019: ASPPH and more than 30 allied public health and medical associations submitted a friend of the court brief in litigation related to Donald Trump’s unilateral decision to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. The Supreme Court is
scheduled to hear oral arguments in the case on November 12. The Supreme Court granted certiorari to hear three cases related to the DACA, consolidated into one (Department of Homeland Security v. Regents of the University of California; Trump v. NAACP, and McAleenan v. Vidal). All three cases challenge to the Dept. of Homeland Security’s authority to wind down the DACA program, arguing the move violates the Administrative Procedure Act and due process guarantees of the Fifth Amendment. The ASPPH, et al. brief informs the Court that the reliance interests associated with the healthcare and research workforces are profound as DACA is the sole source of work authorization for most, if not all, of its recipients.

September 24, 2019: ASPPH and seven other members of the Healthy Air Coalition submitted comments to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on its proposed amendments to reclassify major sources as area sources under Section 112 of the Clean Air Act. The organizations said, “These changes will allow thousands of tons more emissions of some of the most dangerous air pollutants, threatening the health and lives of millions of Americans, including our patients and the public. EPA’s proposed revisions would fail to follow the requirements of the Clean Air Act and the Act’s intended purpose: to protect human health from a vast array of dangerous air pollutants. This is unacceptable.”

September 24, 2019: ASPPH and 55 other organizations wrote to Donald Trump commending and supporting the administration’s decision to remove all non-tobacco flavored e-cigarettes from the market, including menthol and mint flavors. A similar letter was sent to the First Lady.

September 16, 2019: ASPPH and about 50 other associations wrote to all Members of Congress and the Senate in opposition to HR 1854/S 9, legislation that would exempt some cigars from oversight under the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act.

September 9, 2019: ASPPH and 45 other associations wrote to all US Senators voicing support of S 655 and HR 1498, which would make the sale of flavored e-cigarettes illegal.

August 17, 2019: ASPPH wrote to NIH Director Dr. Francis Collins congratulating him on his tenth anniversary as director of the National Institutes of Health. ASPPH said, “On behalf of the academic public health community, congratulations on your decade of service as director of NIH. You should be very proud of your many accomplishments - a legacy that will only be fully recognized and appreciated in the decades ahead...Even with our country’s political divisions and leadership challenges, NIH remains a unifying bastion of hope, discovery and compassion. NIH’s enduring importance is a direct result of your unparalleled political and scientific skills. Thank you for your on-going leadership and service.” The Association was mentioned in a related story in Science.

July 15, 2019: ASPPH and 35 other national organizations wrote to the committee chairs and ranking members of the House and Senate committees with jurisdiction over higher education,
“to express our support for federal investments in graduate and professional students.” The organizations said, “Graduate and professional education are vital elements of the nation’s higher education and innovation ecosystems that empower U.S. economic competitiveness and contribute to our nation’s health and security. As you continue the process of reauthorizing the Higher Education Act (HEA), we understand you will face difficult decisions regarding limited resources and many priorities. We urge you to ensure graduate education is a priority.”

July 11, 2019: ASPPH joined with the Drug Policy Alliance and several other organizations in filing a friend of the court (amicus curiae) brief in the US District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania regarding the legality of supervised consumption sites (SCSs). The brief reviews the evidence that SCSs work, both to reduce deaths and as a pathway to treatment. The brief also argues that the US Department of Justice’s efforts to use the “crack house” statute to ban SCSs is inappropriate and that such sites fall squarely within the goals of the Controlled Substances Act of 1971.

July 9, 2019: ASPPH and 70 other organizations wrote to Congressional leaders again calling for passage of legislation that would provide a pathway to citizenship for undocumented young people and those approved for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). The groups said, “We are pleased that the House of Representatives passed the American Dream and Promise Act of 2019 (HR 6) and that Senators Graham and Durbin have reintroduced the Dream Act of 2019 (S 874). We urge the Senate to pass either bill as soon as possible.”

June 27, 2019: ASPPH and 90 other organizations representing patients and consumers, public health professionals, health information technology (IT) developers, health care providers, and scientists wrote to Senate appropriators asking them “to match the House’s FY 2020 appropriation of $100 million to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for a new, multiyear initiative that will transform the public health surveillance enterprise and save lives. Specifically, this funding would allow CDC, state, local, tribal, and territorial health departments to move from sluggish, manual, paper-based data collection to seamless, automated IT systems and to recruit and retain skilled data scientists to use them.”

June 24, 2019: ASPPH joined more than 70 other public health and medical organizations in issuing a Call to Action on Climate Health and Equity: A Policy Action Agenda to protect the health and safety of all people in the US. The organizations assert, “Climate change is a health emergency. We call on local, state, and national leaders to act now to stop climate pollution, promote resilient communities, and support healthy people in healthy places on a healthy planet.”

June 24, 2019: ASPPH and more than 30 other organizations wrote to the Secretary of the Department of Education concerning serious problems in the administration of the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program. The organizations wrote, “Under 20 U.S.C.
1087e(m)(1)(b), borrowers who have fully qualified for loan forgiveness must still be working in a public interest position when they are granted forgiveness. This requirement would be unexceptionable if borrowers who have completed ten years of qualifying public service and made 120 qualifying loan repayments could have their applications for forgiveness approved promptly. But because of administrative lapses over the past decade, the Department of Education is often unable to process and approve applications promptly. As a practical matter, this means that many borrowers may be unable to obtain forgiveness unless they remain in public service jobs far beyond ten years. There is no justification for imposing this additional unintended obligation on borrowers who have fulfilled their public service requirement.”

June 21, 2019: ASPPH and dozens of other members of the CDC Coalition wrote to Senate appropriators urging the Senate to match the $8.22 billion provided to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s programs in the House FY 2020 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

June 21, 2019: ASPPH endorsed legislation introduced by Cong. Judy Chu ((D-CA), the Protecting Our Students by Terminating Graduate Rates that Add to Debt (POST GRAD) Act. The bill would once again make graduate students eligible to receive Federal Direct Subsidized Loans. That eligibility was ended by the Budget Control Act of 2011. ASPPH’s support was noted in a press release on the bill’s introduction. On July 26, 2019, ASPPH joined with the other members of the Federation of Associations of Schools of the Health Professions in writing to Cong. Chu in support of the bill.

June 20, 2019: ASPPH wrote to selected members of the Senate to express our strong support for raising the legal age for sale of tobacco products to 21 and to share our views on two bipartisan bills recently introduced in the Senate on the issue. ASPPH commended Senators Brian Schatz (D-HI), Todd Young (R-IN), Dick Durbin (D-IL), and Mitt Romney (R-UT) for introducing the Tobacco to 21 Act (S 1258) and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) and Senator Tim Kaine (D-VA) for introducing the Tobacco-Free Youth Act (S 1541). We expressed strong support the Tobacco to 21 Act and urge the removal of one provision of the Tobacco-Free Youth Act. [N.B. The provision of concern was removed during a mark-up of the bill on June 26.]

June 18, 2019: ASPPH wrote to Senator Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) and Rep. Doris Matsui (D-CA) endorsing their legislation (HR 3447 and S 1944) to restore funding to the Prevention and Public Health Fund.

June 10, 2019: ASPPH and 110 other organizations wrote to the House sponsors of the Leading Infrastructure For Tomorrow’s America Act (LIFT America Act) (HR 2741) endorsing the public health provisions in the bill. The organizations said, “The LIFT America Act authorizes critical investments in the public health data infrastructure to transform the speed
and accuracy of public health surveillance. Doing so will enable faster detection and containment of outbreaks, with fewer cases – saving lives and reducing delays in response.”

June 7, 2019: ASPPH joined with more than 100 national and 135 state organizations in endorsing the Vaccine Awareness Campaign to Champion Immunization Nationally and Enhance Safety (VACCINES) Act of 2019 (HR 2862). The organizations send a letter of endorsement to key Congressional leaders, saying, “The VACCINES Act of 2019 is a critical step in combatting vaccine hesitancy and misinformation and ensuring that there is continued public awareness of the importance of vaccinations.”

June 6, 2019: ASPPH and 15 other national organizations wrote to all members of the US Senate asking them to support the International Climate Accountability Act (S 1743). The bill would help ensure that the United States adheres to the science-based targets in the Paris Agreement and develops a plan to meet them, both essential steps to protecting public health from the impacts of climate change.

May 16, 2019: ASPPH and 51 other organizations wrote to Cong. Frank Pallone (D-NJ) and Cong. Donna Shalala (D-FL) endorsing HR 2339, the Reversing the Youth Tobacco Epidemic Act of 2019. The groups wrote, “Your legislation will address the current youth e-cigarette epidemic that is threatening to undermine the progress that has been made in reducing youth cigarette use and also reduce youth use of other tobacco products. Your bill’s comprehensive approach to reducing tobacco use will protect public health and save lives.”

May 13, 2019: ASPPH joined almost 200 other organizations and institutions in writing to all members of the House and Senate expressing strong support for the reauthorization of Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI). The letters urged Congress to enable PCORI to continue its work toward achieving smarter and more efficient health care spending by considering the following recommendations: 1) Reauthorize PCORI and its current funding mechanism for at least an additional 10 years; and, 2) Ensure PCORI stays true to its mission of patient-centered research by maintaining its mandate to conduct comparative clinical effectiveness research. PCORI was authorized by the Affordable Care Act and the current authorization expires on September 30, 2019.

April 30, 2019: ASPPH formally endorsed the proposed Tobacco to 21 Act, legislation introduced in Congress on April 30 that prohibits the sale of tobacco products to anyone under the age of 21 nationwide. Lead sponsors of the legislation (summary, S 1258 text, and HR 2411 text) are Sens. Brian Schatz (D-HI), Todd Young (R-IN), Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Mitt Romney (R-UT) and Reps. Diana DeGette (D-CO) and Chris Stewart (R-UT) for introducing this bipartisan legislation to help prevent young people from starting down a path that often leads to addiction, disease and premature death.
April 30, 2019: ASPPH and 35 other public health and medical organizations submitted formal comments to the Food and Drug Administration on April 30 on the Draft Guidance for Industry on FDA’s proposed Modifications to its Compliance Policy for Certain Deemed Tobacco Products. The organizations said, “on balance we believe the Draft Guidance to constitute an insufficient response to the current crisis of youth e-cigarette use, as well as to the continuing adverse public health consequences of youth cigar smoking.” The organizations said that under the Draft Guidance, flavored e-cigarettes could remain on the market for years to come without FDA public health review and that the restrictions on youth access to flavored e-cigarettes at retail stores and on-line proposed in the Draft Guidance are likely to be inadequate to address the youth e-cigarette epidemic. The letter was organized by the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids.

April 30, 2019: The National Academy of Medicine (NAM) announced on April 30 that ASPPH and more than 100 other organizations across the US have joined NAM in declaring their commitment to reversing national trends in opioid misuse and overdose. The announcement was made at a meeting of the NAM’s Action Collaborative on Countering the US Opioid Epidemic. ASPPH has joined the Collaborative as a network organization. The Action Collaborative is a public-private partnership committed to developing, curating, and disseminating multi-sector solutions designed to reduce opioid misuse and improve outcomes for individuals, families, and communities affected by the opioid crisis.

April 29, 2019: ASPPH and 15 other organizations belonging to the Healthy Air Coalition wrote to Congressional leaders in support of HR 9, the Climate Action Now Act. The organizations said, “The bill would help ensure that the United States adheres to the science-based targets in the Paris Agreement and develops a plan to meet them, both essential steps to protecting public health from the impacts of climate change.”

April 17, 2019: ASPPH and its partners in the Healthy Air Coalition submitted detailed comments on the EPA’s proposed “National Emissions Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants: Coal- and Oil-Fired Electric Utility Steam Generating Units – Reconsideration of Supplemental Finding and Residual Risk and Technology Review” (EPA-HQ-OAR-2018-0794). The comment letter said, “The Mercury and Air Toxics Standards (MATS) is one of the most important public health protections put in place by the US Environmental Protection Agency to reduce these emissions of hazardous air pollutants (HAPs) in the communities we serve. Our organizations fully support the current standards and strongly disagree with EPA’s determination that it ‘is not ‘appropriate and necessary’ to regulate HAP emissions from power plants under Section 112 of the Clean Air Act.’”

April 2, 2019: ASPPH joined with more than 800 other groups in sending a letter to all Senators and Members of Congress urge them to take immediate steps to negotiate a new budget agreement that averts these cuts and provides funding for new investments that our economy
needs. calling for a new budget agreement. The groups said, “Without Congressional action, our nation faces deep cuts in the coming fiscal year in funding for critical nondefense discretionary (NDD) programs — affecting investments that touch every sector of our economy, from health care to infrastructure, scientific research, and education — as well as for defense. If Congress does not act, the misguided austerity policies of the 2011 Budget Control Act (BCA) will govern funding for 2020 and 2021.”

April 1, 2019: ASPPH and more than 500 other organizations sent a letter to Congressional leaders seeking a strong 302(b) funding allocation for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education and Related Agencies spending bill in FY 2020. The letter also called upon lawmakers to raise the caps on non-defense discretionary spending in FY 2020 to allow an increase in the Labor-HHS-Education allocation. The letter was organized by the Coalition for Health Funding (of which ASPPH is a member), the Committee for Education Funding, the Coalition on Human Needs, and the Campaign to Invest in America's Workforce.

March 29, 2019: In a letter to appropriators, more than a dozen organizations, including ASPPH, voiced strong support for the HRSA Public Health Training Center Program. The administration has again proposed zeroing out the program, which currently funds one training center in each HHS region. Separately, seventy-three (73) members of the House, led by Congresswoman Debbie Dingell (D-MI) and Cong. Don Young (R-AK), signed a letter to Congressional appropriators in support of the program. A similar letter in the Senate garnered 25 signatures. The American College for Preventive Medicine was instrumental in producing both the organizational and Congressional letters of support for the program.

March 25, 2019: ASPPH and more than 80 other organizations/institutions/companies wrote to Congress seeking $1 billion over 10 years -- $100 million in FY 2020 – to allow CDC, state, local, tribal, and territorial health departments to move from “sluggish, manual, paper-based data collection to seamless, automated, interoperable IT systems and to recruit and retain skilled data scientists to use them.”

March 22, 2019: ASPPH and its partners in the Health Air Coalition wrote to the leaders of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees urging them to increase funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Climate and Health Program to $15 million. The groups said that the funding is critical for helping state and local health departments prepare and protect their communities from the health impacts of climate change that they are already experiencing.

March 22, 2019: ASPPH joined dozens of other organizations in writing Congressional leaders urging them to advance the Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness & Advancing Innovation Act (PAHPAI, HR 269), which overwhelmingly passed the House of Representatives in January. A similar version passed the Senate Health Education, Labor & Pensions (HELP)
Committee last year. The groups suggested that the PAHPA be added to the disaster relief package being considered by Congress.

March 20, 2019: The member organizations of the Federation of Associations of Schools of the Health Professions (FASHP) wrote to all Members of Congress congratulating them on their election to the 116th Congress and inviting them to utilize FASHP as a resource if they have any questions about health profession education and training. ASPPH is a member of FASHP and joined in signing the letter.

March 18, 2019: ASPPH and dozens of other organizations wrote to Congressional leaders urging them to include in the FY 2020 appropriations bill for CDC $58 million to address the infectious disease impacts of the opioid epidemic. This initiative was authorized by the Substance Use Disorder Prevention that Promotes Opioid Recovery and Treatment for Patients and Communities (SUPPORT) Act. The groups also asked for report language to make clear that this funding should be used to support surveillance, prevention services, detection and linkages to care for the scope of infectious diseases associated with injection drug use, such as viral hepatitis, HIV, and infective endocarditis.

March 15, 2019: ASPPH and other members of the Friends of HRSA coalition wrote to key appropriators recommending that they provide $8.56 billion for discretionary Health Resources and Services Administration programs in the FY 2020 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies appropriations bill. The groups said that while we are grateful for the increases provided for HRSA programs in FY 2019, HRSA’s discretionary budget authority is far too low to effectively address the nation’s current health care needs. Additional funding will allow HRSA to fill preventive and primary health care gaps and to build upon the achievements of HRSA’s more than 90 programs and more than 3,000 grantees.

March 14, 2019: ASPPH and more than 50 other organizations wrote to key Agriculture appropriators in both the House and Senate urging them to approve the authorized level of user fees for the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to oversee tobacco products. The groups said that the user fees will give FDA the resources it needs to protect kids and reduce the serious health and economic harms that tobacco products cause.

March 14, 2019: ASPPH and more than 50 other organizations wrote to key Labor-HHS appropriators in both the House and Senate urging them to increase funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) Office on Smoking and Health (OSH) by $100 million, for a total of $310 million. The organizations said this increase is needed to respond to soaring e-cigarette usage rates among youth and the devastating toll that tobacco continues to take on our nation’s health.
March 8, 2019: ASPPH and five other members of the Healthy Air coalition sent a letter to EPA formally requesting that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) extend the comment deadline for at least 120 additional days on the Proposed Revised Supplemental Finding and Residual Risk and Technology Review for the Mercury and Air Toxics Standards. The organizations further requested that the EPA hold at least three additional public hearings on the proposal.

March 7, 2019: ASPPH and more than 300 other members of the Ad Hoc Group for Medical Research, endorsed the Group’s FY 2020 recommendation of an appropriation of at least $41.6 billion for the National Institutes of Health (NIH), a $2.5 billion increase over the NIH’s program level funding in FY 2019.

March 7, 2019: ASPPH and 151 other members of the Friends of AHRQ wrote to Congressional appropriators requesting $460 million in budget authority for the Agency for Health Research and Quality, which is consistent with the FY 2010 enacted level adjusted for inflation.

March 7, 2019: ASPPH endorsed the recommendation of the Friends of the Title V Maternal and Child Health Services Program, which requested at least $698 million for the Title V Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Services Block Grant program in the FY 2020 Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill.

March 4, 2019: ASPPH and 225 other members of the CDC Coalition wrote to Congressional appropriators urge them to provide at least $7.8 billion for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s programs in the FY 2020 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

March 4, 2019: ASPPH and other groups wrote to the Congressional sponsors of the Climate Change Health Protection and Promotion Act (S 523/HR 1243) thanking them for their ongoing leadership and endorsing the legislation.

February 26, 2019: ASPPH and dozens of other public health organizations sent a letter to key Congressional leaders asking them to provide a significant increase in funding in FY 2020 for the CDC’s National Center for Environmental Health.

February 21, 2019: ASPPH submitted comments on the proposed definition of “behavioral and social science research” issued by the NIH Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research.

February 21, 2019: In a letter to key House and Senate leaders, ASPPH and more than 150 other public health, research and medical organizations called on Congress 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.

January 17, 2019: ASPPH and other members of the PSLF Coalition wrote to all new members of Congress voicing strong support for the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program.

January 17, 2019: ASPPH submitted comments on the draft core, developmental and research objectives being considered for inclusion in Healthy People 2030, the HHS’s nationwide health promotion and disease prevention goals. ASPPH did not oppose any of the proposed objectives but did suggest numerous revisions and additions.

January 17, 2019: ASPPH joined more than 275 other organizations from across a wide range of sectors in sending letters to Congress and the President urging an immediate end to the government shutdown. The letters highlighted just a few of the health impacts of the shutdown, including concerns about food safety, environmental health and tribal health.

January 15, 2019: ASPPH joined with more than 20 other organizations in sending a letter to the Office of the United States Trade Representative calling for the US to ensure that any trade agreement with the United Kingdom include provisions 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 UK not face the threat of investor litigation from the tobacco industry.

January 11, 2019: ASPPH and more than 40 other organizations wrote to the Senate leadership urging them to break the impasse on the Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness and Advancing Innovation Act of 2019, which has been blocked by an unrelated dispute between GOP Senators Burr and Isakson.


January 7, 2019: Members of the ASPPH leadership team met in Atlanta with CDC Director Dr. Robert Redfield and his senior staff on December 17, 2018. On January 7, 2019, ASPPH wrote to Dr. Redfield thanking him for the meeting and reiterated that ASPPH and our members are essential allies of the CDC and that we can add additional value to the CDC while supporting his priorities. We provided specific examples of ways that our members’ work on workforce development, public health research, communications and advocacy align with CDC’s objectives and can continue to help the CDC’s senior leadership address the future challenges facing the nation’s public health system.

Update on January 30, 2020