

Policy Changes Emphasize Equity and Make Public Health More Accessible for People with Disabilities

After working with the New Hampshire Disability & Public Health Project (NH DPH), two of New Hampshire's regional public health networks made policy changes to increase their accessibility. Seacoast public health council learned from NH DPH staff that early meeting times often make it difficult for people with disabilities to participate. In response, they changed their standing meeting time, which previously had convened at 8:00am. Shortly after, the Capital Area regional council followed suit. These actions signaled that both regions want to be inclusive and enable more people with disabilities to get involved in their community's public health.

"We need to walk the talk. If we talk about equity and inclusion, we need to be prepared to act and co-create space for us to work together. Changing the time of our meeting is one thing we can do at the system level to improve access to our Public Health Advisory Council Meetings."

- Paula, Seacoast Public Health

NH DPH works to create policy and systems change to support the health and wellness of people with disabilities. With input from NH DPH staff, the New Hampshire Public Health Association recently released one new and one updated policy position:

Health Equity for People with Disabilities

- This new policy serves as a resource for legislators, policymakers, and students, and provides a basis for NHPHA members to advocate and take action to promote change.

Public Health and Social Justice

- This updated policy now recognizes that ableism has negative consequences on health, and that public health frameworks must address health inequities for people with disabilities.

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