



## 2020 Minnesota State Policy Priorities

*Our mission: To be a relentless force for a world of longer, healthier lives.*

### ♥ **TOBACCO 21**

AHA supports statewide legislation that increases the legal sale age for tobacco from 18 to 21. Nearly 90% of addicted adult smokers started smoking by age 18. Nicotine is addictive, and adolescents and young adults are more susceptible to its effects because their brains are still developing. Increasing the legal sale age for tobacco products—which include e-cigarettes—will help keep tobacco out of schools, preventing youth tobacco use and saving lives. More than 40 Minnesota communities have already taken action by passing local Tobacco 21 ordinances, but the recent surge in youth e-cigarette use demands a statewide response.

### ♥ **HEALTHY KIDS' MEALS**

AHA supports legislation that makes water and milk the default beverage options in kids' meals. Sugary drinks are the leading source of added sugar in the American diet. The average child consumes 30 gallons of sugary drinks every year—enough to fill a bathtub. If we don't reduce these trends, 40% of children are likely to develop type 2 diabetes in their lifetime, which makes them twice as likely to develop and die from cardiovascular disease as adults. Making water and milk the default beverage options for kids' meals at restaurants will promote healthier beverage options and help reduce sugary drink consumption.

### ♥ **SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL**

AHA supports \$6 million for Safe Routes to School infrastructure grants in a bonding bill. Kids should get at least 60 minutes of moderate- to vigorous physical activity each day, and walking and biking to school can provide a good opportunity to achieve that, if it's safe. Safe Routes to School helps improve children's safety by providing safer crosswalks and routes to walk and bike to school, which can increase physical activity and also promote students' health and academic performance. Demand for infrastructure grants continues to grow in Minnesota, with requests for funding far exceeding available state and federal dollars.

### ♥ **ACCESS TO CARE**

AHA advocates for policies that support health care access and coverage for individuals living with or at risk of cardiovascular disease and stroke.

AHA's positions include but are not limited to prohibiting discrimination in coverage for pre-existing conditions, opposing the extension of short-term limited duration health plans, and supporting the continuation of the Palliative Care Advisory Council.

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