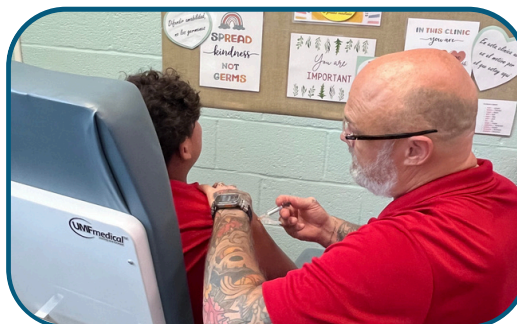
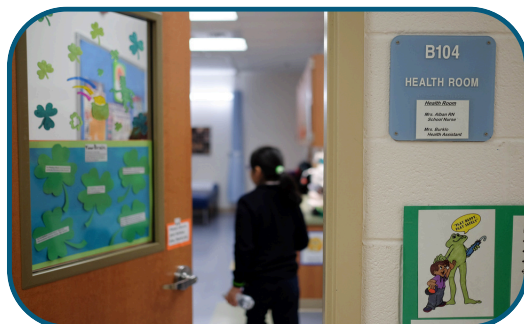


2023 - 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN REPORT



LETTER FROM THE HEALTH OFFICER

A Look Back and a Path Forward

I am truly delighted to present the 2023-2025 Strategic Plan Report, a document that offers a comprehensive, in-depth look at the essential work achieved by the Anne Arundel County Department of Health. This success is not ours alone; it is the direct result of the tireless dedication and collaborative spirit of our entire workforce, alongside our community members and partners across the county.

The implementation of the 2023–2025 Strategic Plan was a crucial milestone, marking our first post-COVID-19 strategy. It successfully incorporated lessons from the pandemic, resulting in a public health system for Anne Arundel County that is more resilient, responsive and equitable.

The plan is built upon four interdependent pillars: our workforce, infrastructure, expanded partnerships and advancing health equity. This report provides a detailed account of the specific, measurable progress achieved in each of these vital areas. Crucially, this document also offers an honest evaluation, highlighting areas where we must sustain and intensify our efforts and identifying ongoing opportunities for innovation, growth and improvement. I am extremely proud of the outlined accomplishments, which represent tangible, real-world enhancements to the lives of Anne Arundel County residents.

A strategic plan, by its very nature, serves as a vital roadmap to a shared, aspirational goal. And, much like a complex and rewarding road trip, our journey has been dynamic, inclusive of necessary detours, valuable side quests that broadened our perspective, and the establishment of new, more efficient routes for service delivery. This report chronicles that full journey. However, we are keenly aware that the Department of Health's mission is ongoing and our work is far from over. To truly safeguard the county's future well-being, the Department must strategically sustain these gains and continue to drive progress.

Therefore, building on this robust foundation of achievement, I am thrilled to formally announce the launch of our new 2026 Strategic Planning process. Our goal is to map out a clear, ambitious path for ongoing innovation, unwavering commitment to equity and sustainable well-being for all residents well into the future. This endeavor cannot be completed in isolation. I wholeheartedly invite you to once again join this essential and transformative effort. Your unique expertise and active involvement were crucial to the success and comprehensive scope of the previous plan. These contributions will be just as vital—perhaps even more so—as we develop and shape the 2026 Strategic Plan.

Together, leveraging the lessons of the past and the energy of the present, we will continue our work to build a healthier, safer, more resilient and more vibrant future for everyone who calls Anne Arundel County home.

Sincerely,
Tonii Gedin



Dr. Tonii Gedin

INTRODUCTION

When this plan was developed in 2022, the agency was focused on what we learned during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially regarding our systems and operations, our staff, and the health disparities it highlighted. The 2023-2025 Strategic Plan was the product of staff, agency leadership, and stakeholder input, with key themes emphasizing partnerships and health equity.

Since then, the Department leadership has changed, funding that supported public health and residents during COVID-19 has ended, and most recently, there have been federal shifts in public health. However, throughout this, the Strategic Plan work continued and resulted in many successes.

As we wrap up our 2023-2025 Strategic Plan, we are excited to share what we achieved, as well as the ongoing work and opportunities that will continue. The four priority areas in this plan were very interwoven, with each success often impacting multiple priorities. We also recognize every plan will have challenges and have included them in this report for further consideration as we develop our next Strategic Plan.

*Improving
Health Together*



2023-2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

OUR VISION

A vibrant Anne Arundel County with
healthy people in healthy communities.

OUR MISSION

The Department of Health's mission is to preserve, promote
and protect the health and well-being of all people
by advancing health equity in Anne Arundel County.

OUR CORE VALUES

Inclusion

We acknowledge, accept
and value every person
we work with and serve,
welcoming differences of
perspective, backgrounds
and abilities.

Integrity

We adhere to strict ethical
standards in performing
our duties, with a high
level of professionalism,
while treating constituents
and colleagues with
fairness and respect.

Excellence

We provide high-quality
and efficient programs
and services and hold
ourselves accountable to
the stakeholders and the
people we serve.

Collaboration

We work jointly across the
Department of Health and
with other agencies and
public organizations to
deliver effective programs
and elevate communities
to improve their health.

Innovation

We will be creative,
resourceful and evidence-
based as we respond to
the changes in the public
health system and the
larger environment in
which we operate.

Respect

We are committed to
treating each other and
the people we serve with
dignity and sensitivity,
ensuring that all are
treated fairly and
equitably.

2023-2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

OUR PRIORITIES

Reinvigorate Our Workforce

Strategies:

- Ensure pay equity
- Champion Department workforce by engaging and recognizing staff and elevating their work
- Develop a retention culture
- Enhance hiring and onboarding processes

Enhance Our Infrastructure

Strategies:

- Pursue national accreditation
- Centralize locations for information sharing and document management
- Streamline shared services across the Department
- Ensure necessary trainings are available for varying levels of staff

Deepen and Expand Partnerships to Empower Our Community

Strategies:

- Collaborate with constituents to expand/deepen partnerships
- Increase funding opportunities for community organizations
- Ensure staff can provide resource connections to the community
- Identify opportunities for partnerships with the local private sector

Advance Health and Health Equity

Strategies:

- Integrate Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) into the work in the county (Health in All Policies)
- Develop a health equity action plan
- Enhance staff education and understanding of SDOH and health equity
- Ensure partnerships include more marginalized and underrepresented groups



PRIORITY 1 REINVIGORATE OUR WORKFORCE

Employees are the most important Department asset. When this plan was developed in 2022, understaffing and the risk of burnout were top areas of concern. Investing in our workforce and developing a retention culture were identified as critical to advance all other plan strategies, making this priority essential.

Strategy 1: Ensure pay equity

Key Accomplishments

Reviewed and changed pay scale for the lowest-paid staff and across positions for pay equity.

Challenges, Opportunities and Ongoing Work

Challenge: The Department employs staff through the state of Maryland and the County, which can create pay inequities due to different pay scales, hiring salaries and salary review practices.

Strategy 2: Engage and recognize staff and elevate their work

Key Accomplishments

- Staff are recognized through shoutouts as a routine feature in:
 - Department social media
 - Monthly staff newsletter
 - EmployeeLink website
- Staff All Stars are featured at monthly All-Staff meetings
- Staff are regularly featured in communications by the Health Officer
- Recognition also occurs within Bureaus
- The Health Officer visits a different Department location each week to engage with staff

Challenges, Opportunities and Ongoing Work

- Due to agency size and multiple locations, engaging and recognizing staff are typically done in a virtual setting. Staff have expressed interest in opportunities to engage in person across Bureaus.
- Opportunities to reward outstanding staff are being considered, such as conference scholarships.



Dedicated Staff Shoutout Section on EmployeeLink



PRIORITY 1 REINVIGORATE OUR WORKFORCE

Strategy 3: Develop a retention culture

Key Accomplishments

- Conducted an Employee Satisfaction Survey in 2025, and developed a Employee Satisfaction Action Plan to address survey results.
- Engaged senior leadership to identify Bureau-specific actions for the Satisfaction Action Plan.
- Participated in PH Wins survey in 2025 to benchmark staff responses compared to national results for insights into retention, burnout, and training needs.

Challenges, Opportunities and Ongoing Work

Ongoing: plans are in the process of being implemented in response to the surveys conducted in 2025.



Strategy 4: Enhance hiring and onboarding processes

Key Accomplishments

- Reviewed and updated New Employee Orientation in 2025.
- Updated/created documentation for hiring process and for policies included in onboarding.
- Review of Department trainings in 2025, including new hire trainings.

Challenges, Opportunities and Ongoing Work

In 2025, the Department began a process to assess and overhaul employee trainings and improve leadership and development opportunities. This work is continuing into 2026.



PRIORITY 2 ENHANCE OUR INFRASTRUCTURE

Organization infrastructure was recognized as closely linked to priority 1 to provide employees with a supportive environment. Improving organizational effectiveness and efficiency were also prioritized to help the Department achieve other priorities and be positioned for the future initiatives such as data modernization.

Strategy 1: Pursue national accreditation

Key Accomplishments

- Updated key documents to meet accreditation standards, including the Community Health Needs Assessment, and developed the Health Equity Plan.
- Accreditation standards were included as considerations for Department initiatives, including staff retention and training, and the new policy and procedures platform.

Challenges, Opportunities and Ongoing Work

- Challenge: Staff capacity and competing large initiatives have hindered progress towards accreditation.
- Opportunity: As underlying structures and processes continue to be updated, there is further opportunity to ensure the Department meets accreditation standards.

Strategy 2: Centralize locations for information sharing and document management

Key Accomplishments

- Overhauled EmployeeLink in 2025, the internal website used to share information with staff.
- Purchased and implemented PowerDMS in 2025, to house, review, and manage Department policies and procedures.
- Recruited a compliance officer for policy and procedure oversight.

Challenges, Opportunities and Ongoing Work

- Ongoing: PowerDMS implementation is in process, with review processes being created for every policy and procedure.
- Ongoing: The new EmployeeLink will continue to expand, including Bureau-specific pages.



PRIORITY 2 ENHANCE OUR INFRASTRUCTURE

Strategy 3: Streamline shared services across the Department

Key Accomplishments

- Acquired a billing consultant in 2025 to assess practices and provide recommendations to increase billing efficiency, maximize revenue, and improve overall billing practices across the Department
- Acquired an informatics consultant in 2025 to assess Department efficiency and opportunities

Challenges, Opportunities and Ongoing Work

Ongoing: the results from the billing and informatic consults will inform future plans

Strategy 4: Ensure necessary trainings are available for varying levels of staff

Key Accomplishments

- Acquired a leadership and development consultant in 2025 to review Department trainings and make recommendations to support staff.
- Overhauled new employee orientation to ensure staff are provided with initial trainings that lead to a successful onboarding.

Challenges, Opportunities and Ongoing Work

- Challenge: because staff are employed through two different systems of the county and state, there are differences in the trainings available via their respective platforms
- Ongoing: the results from the leadership and development assessment will inform plans
- Opportunity: the new EmployeeLink could be used to support employee training opportunities

PRIORITY 3 DEEPEN AND EXPAND PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships are both a key strength and an opportunity for the Department to address the social drivers of health. This plan included partnerships as foundational to support Priority 4 to advance health equity.

Strategy 1: Collaborate with constituents to expand/deepen partnerships

Key Accomplishments

- Invested in training constituents through community partners as instructors for Mental Health First Aid, Youth Mental Health First Aid, and Naloxone Use.
- In 2024, initiated the Maternal and Infant Health Task Force, and collaborative effort including hospitals, providers, social workers, and residents to address poor maternal and birth outcomes.
- Provided public Community Resilience trainings, and Behavioral Health Symposiums to engage partners and constituents.
- Established an Outreach Coordinator position and developed a process for partners to request Department participation at events.

Challenges, Opportunities and Ongoing Work

- Ongoing: The Department engages partners through multiple collaborative initiatives, including the Healthy Anne Arundel Coalition, the Gun Violence Intervention Team, and the Overdose Task Force, for example.
- Ongoing: Ten public health equity forums are held annually as a way to expand knowledge and foster collaboration among partners.
- Ongoing: Outreach in collaboration with partners requesting event participation.
- Opportunity: A list of Department partners was created, and may be an opportunity for a database of partners.

Strategy 2: Increase funding opportunities for community organizations

Key Accomplishments

- Established permanent funding for Community Health Ambassador program, which grants funds to community partners for community health workers.
- Established community partner funding for a violence interruption site in Eastport, Annapolis.
- Expanded chronic disease funding to community organizations to prevent and screen for cancer.

Challenges, Opportunities and Ongoing Work

- Ongoing/Challenge: Anticipate funding to continue for established community partners, but with federal changes and a new County Executive in 2026, this may shift.
- Opportunity: Connecting community organizations with the new [Anne Arundel County Non-profit Center](#), and incorporating their expertise could benefit partners.

PRIORITY 3 DEEPEN AND EXPAND PARTNERSHIPS

Strategy 3: Ensure staff can provide resource connections to the community

Key Accomplishments

- Increased staff access to Language Line for translation services by providing an app and video options.
- Created an Outreach Team comprised of staff from across the Department to attend community events and community residents to resources.
- Overhauled the Department public website to update information staff can share with residents.
- The Healthy Anne Arundel Coalition, led by the Health Officer, implemented a local [FindHelp](#) platform to house and search for health and support services.

Challenges, Opportunities and Ongoing Work

- Challenge: Adequate resources in the community, particularly for social drivers of health such as housing, are limited.
- Opportunity: FindHelp is expanding to provide a screening tool for federal and state resources. Better incorporating this tool and FindHelp overall could be beneficial for staff and residents.



Strategy 4: Identify opportunities for partnerships with the local private sector

Key Accomplishments

Private businesses were recruited to join the Healthy Anne Arundel Coalition workgroups to advance county priorities.

Challenges, Opportunities and Ongoing Work

Opportunity: Identify intersections of health and business to engage with the private sector, and develop a process for private sector outreach.

PARTNERSHIPS AND HEALTH EQUITY

To expand our partnerships (Priority 3) and advance Health Equity (Priority 4) requires a consistent presence within our communities and coordination with the trusted organizations and individuals within those communities. The examples below highlight how we have expanded our partnerships and health equity together.

Health-to-go Vending Machines

In 2024, the Department installed vending machines stocked with the lifesaving drug naloxone in areas where there is a higher instance of opioid overdoses. Partnerships with the county Public Library System, Department of Detention Facilities, Department of Aging and Disability, and the American Legion have been critical to house the machines and ensure accessibility for residents. Based on community needs, the vending machines may also include COVID-19 test kits, masks, and safe-sex kits, for example.

Cure Violence Annapolis

In 2024, the Department established a community-based violence interruption program, Cure Violence, in the Eastport community in Annapolis. They are housed with a community partner that oversees all operations and employs community members with lived experience as trusted individuals.



Behavioral Health Symposiums and Summits

During the COVID-19 pandemic, behavioral health needs increased substantially in the county. To address the growing need, a new annual Suicide Prevention Summit was launched, and our Provider Symposium was refreshed to include more community-based organizations. These convenings are critical to foster connections to support residents and also provide training to advance health equity, with topics including embracing cultural humility, for example.



PRIORITY 4 ADVANCE HEALTH AND HEALTH EQUITY

Addressing the upstream drivers of health are consistently recognized as critical to the Department's mission, with a focus on the historically under-resourced and marginalized populations in the county. Optimal health for all requires addressing the structures and conditions in our environment that lead to health inequities.

Strategy 1: Integrate social determinants of health (SDOH) into the work in the county (Health in All Policies)

Key Accomplishments

- Department leaders are members of various county Boards and Commissions to ensure health is considered in plans and policies, including the Cannabis Commission, Joint Commission on the Opportunity Gap, and Transportation Commission, for example.
- Provided data, input, and proposed language for County legislation and participated in legislative workgroups.

Challenges, Opportunities and Ongoing Work

Challenge: Formalizing Health in All Policies was not a county priority, possibly due to existing informal processes and specific initiatives focused on SDOH in the county.

Strategy 2: Develop a health equity action plan

Key Accomplishments

- Conducted an extensive health equity assessment process including staff, stakeholders, and community members was from 2023-2024.
- Completed and published the Health Equity Plan in 2025.

Challenges, Opportunities and Ongoing Work

- Ongoing: the Health Equity Plan implementation is in process and will continue to develop in 2026.
- Challenge: The federal administration has reduced, altered, and in some cases rescinded funding that helps to advance community health equity. We anticipate continued changes in funding and ongoing impacts on programs and services, which may require frequent updates to the Health Equity Plan.



PRIORITY 4 ADVANCE HEALTH AND HEALTH EQUITY

Strategy 3: Enhance staff education and understanding of SDOH and health equity

Key Accomplishments

Starting in 2024, all staff participated in “Elevating our Distinctions” training, to set a baseline for language and knowledge of diversity, equity and inclusion. Program managers and senior leaders attended two additional classes to further develop an inclusive culture in the Department.

Challenges, Opportunities and Ongoing Work

- Ongoing: The Department will continue to provide the foundational “Elevating our Distinctions” classes to new staff.
- Opportunity: There are many external learning opportunities for SDOH and health equity. Providing a way to share and a department-wide budget to support attending could help increase staff knowledge.

Strategy 4: Ensure partnerships include more marginalized and underrepresented groups

Key Accomplishments

- In 2023, launched the Harm Reduction Advisory Council, a diverse coalition of lived and living-experience experts and traditional stakeholders to guide countywide harm reduction efforts.
- Expanded partnerships for chronic disease screenings to better reach populations with disparities.
- Staff actively support the [ENOUGH Act](#) teams in Anne Arundel County, of community members creating poverty-fighting opportunities.
- The Healthy Anne Arundel Coalition initiated a Disability Inclusion Committee in 2024 to create partnerships and embed opportunities in plans and events.
- In 2025, the Community Advisory Council of Black birthing persons with lived experience was launched to amplify the voice of people of color to improve maternal and birth outcomes.

Challenges, Opportunities and Ongoing Work

- Challenge: Department COVID-19 funding was used to support partnerships focused on underrepresented groups. As these funds ended, the Department has pivoted to continue engagement to support agency priorities. However, funding is expected to continue to tighten, which may change these partnerships.
- Ongoing: The Community Health Ambassador program, which began to support COVID-19 vaccination efforts, is now a permanently funded program that provides grants to community organizations to support community health workers in historically under-resourced areas with poor health outcomes.

Acknowledgements

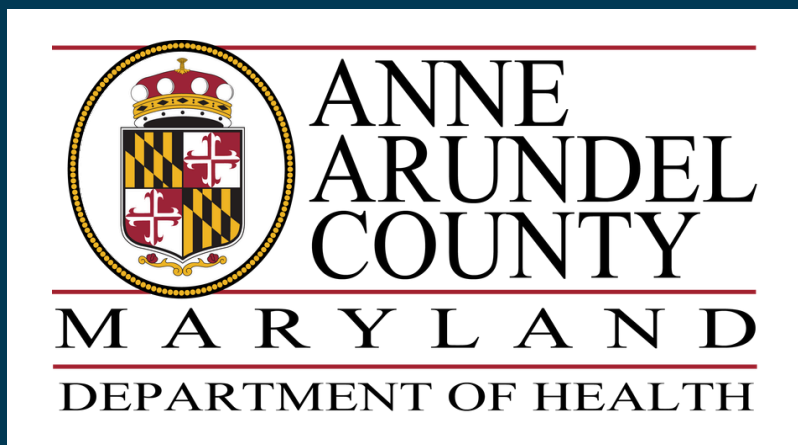
Staff across the department participated in workgroups to help identify and implement action items.

This Plan would not have been possible without their thoughtful participation.

What's Next?

Our new Strategic Plan will be published in 2026 to identify our priorities and guide our work to strengthen our Department.

Please visit us at aahealth.org to learn more.



3 Harry S Truman Parkway
Annapolis, MD 21401



410-222-7095
[AAHealth.org](https://aahealth.org)