



2024

ANNUAL REPORT



JOHNS HOPKINS
BLOOMBERG SCHOOL
of PUBLIC HEALTH

Bloomberg American
Health Initiative

BLOOMBERG AMERICAN HEALTH INITIATIVE

Bloomberg American Health Initiative

Through education, research, and practice, the Bloomberg American Health Initiative works to address critical 21st-century challenges to health in the United States to improve health outcomes, advance equity, and save lives in five core areas: addiction and overdose, environmental challenges, adolescent health, food systems for health, and violence.

Established in late 2016 with a \$300 million gift from Bloomberg Philanthropies in honor of the centennial of the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, the Initiative has grown to include hundreds of collaborating organizations, Bloomberg Fellows, and research projects.

2024 was a year of greater collaboration for the Initiative. This year, we welcomed 60 new Bloomberg Fellows, provided funding for six centers and institutes at the Bloomberg School and 75 grants, hosted the seventh Bloomberg American Health Summit, and released three new high impact projects that have garnered the attention of communities across the country. This annual report shares some of these highlights.

Addiction &
Overdose

Adolescent
Health

Environmental
Challenges

Food Systems
for Health

Violence



KEY 2024 DATA POINTS

TOTAL FELLOWS

388 total, including **327** MPH students, **61** DrPH students, and **183** alumni

COURSES

38 courses taken by **over 3,000** students to date
3 Coursera courses taken by **over 24,000** people

PARTNERS AND COLLABORATING ORGANIZATIONS

626 organizations, including **318** collaborating organizations across **43** states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Mariana Islands

ENDOWED FACULTY

The Initiative has provided endowment support to **19** Bloomberg Professors of American Health and **nine** Bloomberg Centennial Professors

FUNDED PROJECTS

Provided funding for **75** grants, including **47** community collaborations, **six** applied experience awards, **six** Spark and Vanguard research grants, **two** federal details, and **two** full SCI-BAR awards

COMMUNICATIONS

The Initiative website attracted **193,100** users and generated **353,349** views. On social media, the Initiative accounts now have **3,675** followers on Twitter/X, **4,358** followers on LinkedIn, and **975** followers on Instagram. The newly relaunched American Health Podcast was downloaded **866** times. Initiative leadership and faculty were featured in over **100** notable media outlets.

EVENTS

The 2024 Bloomberg American Health Summit had **532** in-person attendees and was livestreamed by **1,302** more. It was covered by **16** media outlets.

Addiction & Overdose

RESEARCH

A NEW APPROACH TO FENTANYL TEST STRIP DISTRIBUTION

Susan Sherman, PhD, MPH, Bloomberg Professor of American Health in the Department of Health, Behavior, and Society, and her collaborators at Hennepin Healthcare, including Bloomberg Fellow JR Westberg, leveraged a Network of Practice award to introduce a novel strategy: distributing fentanyl test strips in the emergency department. Between 2020 and 2021, deaths from fentanyl and its analogs rose by 49% in the United States, now comprising the majority of opioid overdose fatalities. Fentanyl test strips, which allow individuals to detect the presence of fentanyl in substances, have proven effective in reducing overdose rates. Over three months, 31% of patients presenting with symptoms of an overdose were offered test strips along with a conversation about harm reduction. Among the patients who received test strips, only one returned with a subsequent overdose within 14 days, compared to eight subsequent overdoses among those who did not receive test strips in the same period. This innovative approach offers valuable insight into reducing opioid-related deaths nationwide.

POLICY

TREATING SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER IN CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

In early 2024, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration launched new initiatives to expand access to opioid use disorder treatment in jails and carceral facilities. To explore the potential impact of these policies, Brendan Saloner, PhD, Bloomberg Professor of American Health, joined colleagues from Johns Hopkins University and the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy for a convening at the Bloomberg Center in Washington, D.C. During the conversation, Dr. Rahul Gupta, director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, noted that offering substance use disorder treatment in every jail across the country could save up to 16,000 lives each year.



Fellow Spotlight



Bloomberg Fellow Rayce Samuelson serves as an overdose prevention specialist at OnPoint NYC's East Harlem Overdose Prevention Center, the first sanctioned overdose prevention center in the U.S. In this role, Rayce supervises a team focused on preventing and reversing overdose, educating on safer drug use practices, and providing internal and external referrals for ongoing services.



Bloomberg Fellow Brooklynn Barney is an Anishinaabe woman residing on the Fond du Lac Reservation in Minnesota where she serves as the administrative program coordinator for the Great Lakes Hub of the Johns Hopkins University Center for Indigenous Health. Brooklynn supports the team's day-to-day operations and projects focused on harm reduction in her community.

Adolescent Health

RESEARCH

CENTER US: A NATIVE YOUTH SURVEY

Throughout 2023 and 2024, Bloomberg Fellow Katy Stewart and the team at the Center for Native American Youth collected data from approximately 1,000 Native youth survey participants to better understand their needs and priorities in areas such as culture, resource access, mental health, and civic engagement. Their findings revealed that Native youth who feel culturally educated are four times more likely to view themselves as capable of making a difference compared to those who do not. The study also found that many Native youth perceive higher education as unattainable due to financial and resource constraints, indicating greater need for funding and culturally relevant teachings.

EQUITY

BRINGING MENTAL HEALTH PROMOTION TO SCHOOLS IN BALTIMORE

With support from the Initiative, Tamar Mendelson, PhD, MA, Bloomberg Professor of American Health in the Department of Mental Health, and her team trained existing school staff in Baltimore City schools to implement a new strategy to manage adversity. RAP Club—short for “Relax, be Aware, and do a Personal rating”—is a school-based program that teaches mindfulness techniques to help students find ways to process big emotions. Since its launch, RAP Club has shown significant success in reducing depressive symptoms, anxiety, and behavioral issues among eighth graders in Baltimore City schools.



RESEARCH

A NATIONWIDE ANALYSIS OF CHILD ACCESS PREVENTION LAWS

Research led by Holly Wilcox, PhD, MA, professor in the Department of Mental Health, and colleagues at the Johns Hopkins Center for Suicide Prevention found that child access prevention firearm storage policies effectively reduce firearm suicide deaths, as well as firearm-related unintentional injuries and homicide in youth ages 1–17. The work, funded through a Spark award from the Initiative, found that these laws lowered suicide rates by up to 14%. The policies were found to be most effective in reducing youth suicide by firearms when they required parents or guardians to store firearms unloaded and locked in a secure device.

Fellow Spotlight



Bloomberg Fellow Oronde Cruger and his organization, Speak About It, work closely with young people living in Maine who come from marginalized backgrounds. Through his work, Oronde seeks to establish practical strategies to teach young people, especially those with marginalized identities, bodily autonomy and give them the tools to feel safe in their relationships.



Bloomberg Fellow Jennifer Corser is an urgent care coordinator at the Calvert County Health Department in the Behavioral Health division in Prince Frederick, Maryland. Jennifer provides case management and recovery planning services to clients who have received services from Calvert Crisis Response.

Environmental Challenges

RESEARCH

REDUCING ARSENIC LEVELS IN RURAL DRINKING WATER SUPPLIES

A community-led water-testing project in Native American communities found a 47% reduction in urinary arsenic levels after installing arsenic filters and implementing a digital health program. The two-year study, led by researchers at the Bloomberg School in collaboration with Bloomberg Fellow David Harvey, involved 50 households with private wells exceeding EPA arsenic limits, and included regular phone calls to encourage filter use and maintenance. Participants reported a significant increase in using arsenic-filtered water for drinking and cooking. The researchers collaborated with community members, tribal organizations, and the Indian Health Service to ensure the program met local needs and addressed barriers to filter use.



RESEARCH

IMPROVING EPA WATER QUALITY REPORTS IN BALTIMORE

Using a Spark award from the Initiative, Mary Fox, PhD '01, MPH, associate practice professor in the Department of Health Policy and Management, worked with Baltimore residents to identify key challenges and opportunities for improving consumer confidence reports. These reports, required by the EPA to inform the public about drinking water quality, are often filled with technical jargon, making them difficult for consumers to understand. Fox's research revealed that Consumer Confidence Reports scored poorly on readability and left constituents wanting clearer, localized information. Her work prompted the development of new, user-friendly designs that were shared with the EPA to guide future improvements.

Fellow Spotlight



Bloomberg Fellow Mara Moss currently serves as a strategy, planning, and operations associate at the Natural Resources Defense Council where she helps implement project management and operations systems to confront the climate crisis.



Bloomberg Fellow Georgia Gempler is a program manager of Health and Wellbeing at the National League of Cities where she contributes to many areas of their health portfolio, including working with cities to implement wastewater monitoring, form community violence prevention action plans, and work toward equitable health outcomes.

Food Systems for Health

POLICY

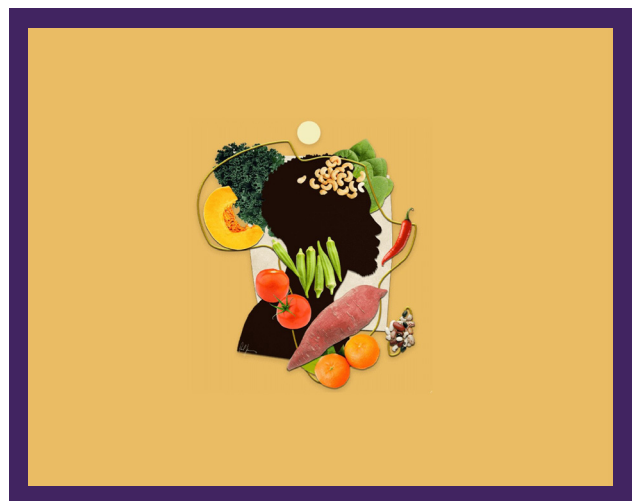
USING AI TO TRACK FOOD INSECURITY IN SOUTH CAROLINA

With support from a Network of Practice grant from the Initiative, Openfields, a social innovation consulting firm, developed the South Carolina Food Insecurity Media Tracker using their AI-powered platform, Orchard, to better understand food insecurity across the state. This tool aggregates local stories and trends related to food insecurity, providing stakeholders with real-time insights through a public dashboard and narrative briefs on topics like the impact of inflation and food insecurity on college campuses. The media tracker offers a new way for communities to share solutions, strengthen advocacy, and address food insecurity across South Carolina.

EQUITY

MARKETING MATTERS: BRINGING HEALTHY FOOD TO BLACK COMMUNITIES

An evaluation led by researchers at the Bloomberg School titled, “Operation Good Food and Beverages,” takes action on the need for healthier food in Black communities and uses social media to counter ethnically-targeted marketing of unhealthy food and beverages. With support from the Initiative, the researchers evaluated the impact of social media content, a website with a signable petition, and a social media toolkit. The findings provide a clearer understanding of the types of content, messaging, and platforms that have the greatest potential to reach target audiences to optimize future campaigns.



Fellow Spotlight



Bloomberg Fellow Jillian Bunge is the vice president of Impact and Outreach at United Way of Greater Toledo where she guides their collective impact work over a three-county footprint in northwest Ohio. She oversees their community engagement with local partners and manages their data-driven, philanthropic grantmaking process.



Bloomberg Fellow Allison Duda is the DC Youth Nutrition coordinator at Capital Area Food Bank where she oversees the Family Market and School Pantry programs operating in 31 public and charter schools based in Washington, D.C.

Violence

EDUCATION

FAIR PLAY: SEXUAL VIOLENCE PREVENTION FOR ATHLETES

Between August 2023 and January 2024, over 400 student-athletes at two universities participated in Fair Play, an eight-hour training course developed by Kristy McCray, PhD, a professor at Otterbein University. Through a Network of Practice grant from the Initiative, McCray and her team delivered the two- to three-day workshop to small groups of students. Student-centered activities included videos, worksheets, and discussions, achieving an intense saturation shown to be effective with sexual violence prevention and bystander intervention techniques. McCray found that following the completion of the training, students illustrated an understanding of consent, shared more gender-equitable attitudes, decreased rape myth acceptance, and increased intentions for bystander intervention.



POLICY

EVIDENCE-BASED POLICY SOLUTIONS TO GUN VIOLENCE IN OREGON

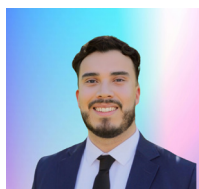
Researchers at the Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions at the Bloomberg School used funding from a Vanguard award to analyze Connecticut's handgun purchaser licensing law on firearm homicide and suicide rates. The analysis, which drew from CDC data, found significant differences in the efficacy of the laws across race-, sex-, and age-group strata. Applying the model from Connecticut, the researchers also found that if the state of Oregon had enacted a similar law, over 750 lives could have been saved between 1995 and 2005. This model and the data it provides is now being used to advocate for gun reform on the state level.

EVIDENCE

HOW ZIP CODES IMPACT FATALITY RATES

Researchers at the Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Prevention analyzed the impact an individual's ZIP code has on their likelihood of being fatally shot by police. Using a Spark award from the Initiative, researchers analyzed 6,901 fatal police shootings between 2015 and 2022 across 32,736 ZIP codes that had publicly available demographic, socioeconomic, and police shooting data, representing 79% of U.S. ZIP codes. They found that those at highest risk are 27 times more likely to be fatally shot by police than those at lowest risk.

Fellow Spotlight



Bloomberg Fellow Andres Estrada serves as a project coordinator at Antelope Valley Partners for Health in Lancaster, California. His role involves leading efforts to establish violence and trauma prevention coalitions across Los Angeles County.



Bloomberg Fellow Montana Filoteo is a researcher for the Minnesota Youth Sex Trading Collaborative at the University of Minnesota, where they coordinate research studies analyzing Minnesota's public health response to youth sexual exploitation.



CELEBRATING LIFE SUICIDE PREVENTION PROGRAM

Native Americans have the lowest life expectancy among racial and ethnic groups in the U.S.—70.1 years versus 78.5 years for white people—according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC data shows Native Americans experienced the highest overall suicide rate in 2021, increasing 26% over the previous year, the highest year-over-year increase since 2018. To address these inequities, White Mountain Apache tribal leaders and academic collaborators at the Bloomberg School are working to scale up the Celebrating Life Suicide Prevention Program.

The program, established 20 years ago, addresses alarming rates of suicide in the community with community-based surveillance and case management support. In the program's first 12 years, the White Mountain Apache Tribe saw a 38% decrease in suicide deaths and a 53% decrease in suicide attempts across ages.

The new resources, now widely available to other Native American tribes, were developed with tribal leadership with support from the Johns Hopkins Center for Indigenous Health and the Initiative.

Expanded resources for tribes include:

- Policy guidelines, including templates for tribal policies and resolutions to support mandated data collection
- Data-collection tools, electronic forms
- A digital database template to track suicide behaviors, substance use, and non-suicidal self-harm
- A case management training program for suicide prevention teams
- Budget recommendations for training and program management



CENTER FOR
INDIGENOUS HEALTH

Celebrating Life

Suicide Prevention Program: Surveillance and
Case Management



The Celebrating Life Suicide Prevention Program is the tribally-mandated case management follow-up and referral system on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation. This report describes the White Mountain Apache Tribe's strategies for addressing suicide behaviors, binge drinking, and other self-injurious behaviors. This overview can inform adaptation of the community-based suicide prevention model for other contexts and communities.



SCAN TO LEARN MORE



HOPKINS JUDICIAL HEALTH NOTES

There can be immense public health impacts of court cases and court decisions on the local, state, and federal levels. **Keshia Pollack Porter, PhD '06, MPH**, Bloomberg Centennial Professor and chair of the Bloomberg School's Department of Health Policy and Management, and **Stefanie Carignan, MA**, associate director of the Bloomberg School's Health in All Policies Initiative, developed Hopkins Judicial Health Notes to evaluate these health implications.

Hopkins Judicial Health Notes draw on public health expertise and evidence to provide insights into the health and equity considerations of court decisions at various levels. They answer three main questions: What are the potential health effects of this case, who is most likely to be affected, and how can public health be protected?

To date, the researchers have analyzed three court cases to demonstrate how this methodology can be applied to other cases and decisions.

So far, the researchers have analyzed:

- *City of Grants Pass v. Johnson*
- *United States v. Daniels*
- *Utah Physicians for a Healthy Environment v. Utah Department of Natural Resources*

The researchers will continue to monitor the legal landscape and develop Hopkins Judicial Health Notes for new cases and decisions and will offer training and technical assistance to groups interested in learning more.



How do major
judicial rulings impact
health and equity?

SCAN TO LEARN MORE



VIOLENCE REDUCTION COUNCILS

The United States experienced a 30% increase in homicide rates in 2020—its highest annual increase in more than 100 years. In 2024, homicides were the second leading cause of death for people ages 15 to 24—surpassing cancers, heart disease, diabetes, and liver disease combined, and research shows homicides have a disproportionate impact on Black Americans.

But violence is preventable.

Violence Reduction Councils take an interdisciplinary, data-driven, and public health-focused approach to violence prevention and intervention. These councils bring together a wide range of community members—from police officers to civilians to teachers—to discuss trends in violence in their communities and build community-specific strategies to reduce violence. They're proven to prevent violence, enact sustainable improvements to reduce violence in cities, and rebuild trust among local governments, law enforcement, and community members.

A project led by **Cassandra Crifasi, PhD, MPH**, associate professor in the Department of Health Policy and Management, and **Mallory O'Brien, PhD**, associate scientist in the Department of Health Policy and Management, with funding from the Initiative serves to empower communities to develop and implement Violence Reduction Councils through training and toolkits.

The project website includes all the documents and training tools needed for communities across the nation to take action and build Violence Reduction Councils to help keep their neighborhoods peaceful and safe.



SCAN TO LEARN MORE





LIFE EXPECTANCY YEARS SHORTER IN THE UNITED STATES COMPARED TO THE UNITED KINGDOM

A new report from the Initiative released in December reveals that life expectancy in the United States averages 78.6 years, compared to 81.3 years in England and Wales—an overall gap of 2.7 years.

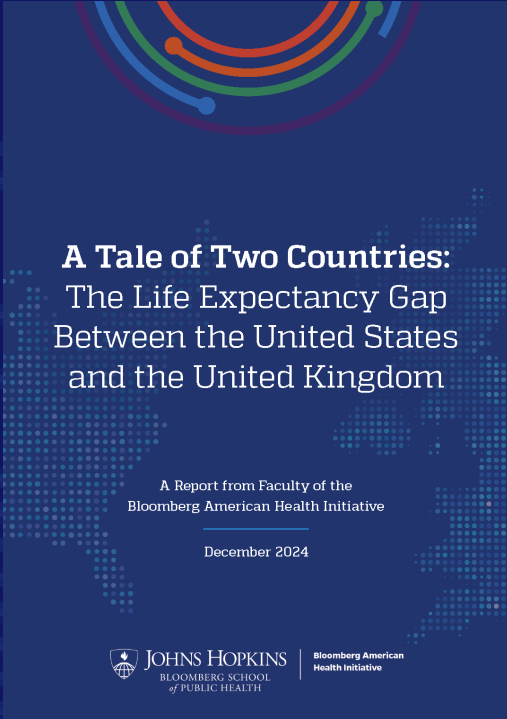
The analysis, based on 2023 data, attributes this difference to preventable causes of death—heart disease, overdose, firearm violence, and motor vehicle crashes.

The report, *A Tale of Two Countries: The Life Expectancy Gap Between the United States and the United Kingdom*, offers evidence-based solutions from Johns Hopkins public health experts to close this gap and extend life spans in the U.S.

Key findings include:

- **Cardiovascular Disease:** The leading contributor to the life expectancy gap, cardiovascular disease is linked to environmental factors, structural conditions, and lifestyle choices. The U.S. death rate from cardiovascular issues is 38% higher than that of England and Wales.
- **Overdose Deaths:** Overdoses are the second leading cause of the gap. The U.S. overdose death rate is more than three times higher—31.6 per 100,000, compared to 9.3 per 100,000 in England and Wales.
- **Gun-Related Deaths:** The death rate from firearm-related homicides and suicides is 13.3 per 100,000 in the U.S., compared to just 0.1 per 100,000 in England and Wales. In 2023, 90 people died from firearm-related causes in England and Wales, while the U.S. saw more than 45,000 deaths.
- **Motor Vehicle Crashes:** The U.S. motor vehicle death rate is six times higher than in England and Wales—13.3 per 100,000 versus 2.2 per 100,000.

Additionally, the researchers found even larger disparities in life expectancy for certain groups. For example, firearm-related homicide and suicide rates are 485.9 times higher for U.S. residents under 25 than for their peers in England and Wales. Drug overdose rates for people under 25 are 4.5 times higher in the U.S.

The report cover features a dark blue background with a faint, dotted map of the United States and United Kingdom. At the top, there are several concentric, curved lines in blue, green, and orange. The title is centered in white text.

A Tale of Two Countries: The Life Expectancy Gap Between the United States and the United Kingdom

A Report from Faculty of the
Bloomberg American Health Initiative

December 2024



JOHNS HOPKINS
BLOOMBERG SCHOOL
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Health Initiative

Men overall had the largest age gap in life expectancy, a difference of 3.4 years, and lower life expectancy overall. Men living in the U.S. have a life expectancy of 75.9 years, while those in England and Wales have a life expectancy of 79.3 years. Women have a difference of 1.9 years, with the U.S. having a life expectancy of 81.3 years compared with 83.2 years in England and Wales.

The report also highlights health policies, some in place in the U.K., that can address the key areas found to be responsible for the life expectancy gap between the two countries.

READ THE FULL REPORT



Bloomberg American Health Summit

The seventh annual Bloomberg American Health Summit brought together public health practitioners, policymakers, community organizations, and Bloomberg Fellows in Washington, D.C., from December 2–4 to discuss evidence-based health policies that remain critical to advancing health in a politically divided country.

Speakers included leaders from state and federal public health agencies, political figures, faculty from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, journalists, and representatives from community organizations.



Bloomberg Fellows also had the opportunity to meet and strategize with the Initiative's growing network of collaborating organizations who are on the cutting edge of public health in communities across the country. Sessions covered strategies to work across political divides to evaluate and reform long-standing policies that impact public health.





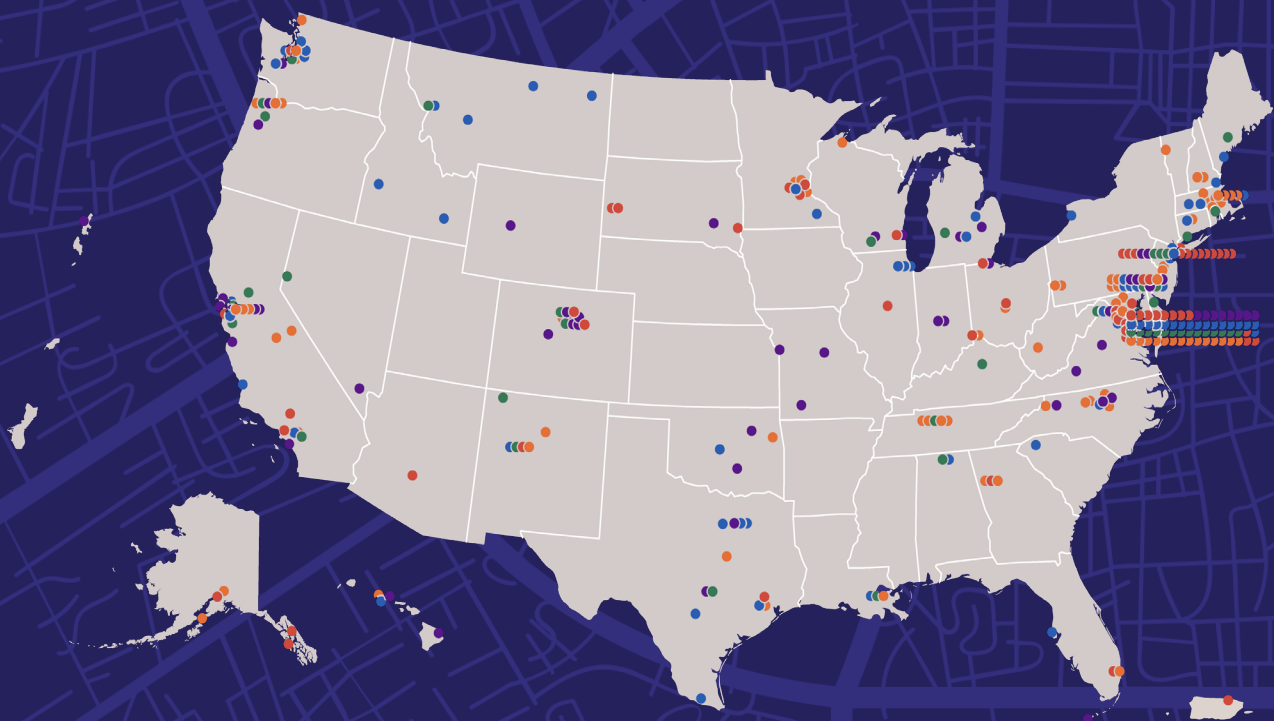
Panel discussions highlighted the importance of working across political divides to advance public health in uncertain political times. Sessions included:

- [Building Trust While Upholding Scientific Integrity](#)
- [The Role of City Government in Public Health](#)
- [Fixing our Broken Food System](#)
- [Empowering Youth: Advancing Mental Health and Wellness](#)
- [Transforming Transportation](#)
- [Expanding Access to Treatment in Correctional Facilities](#)
- [Advancing Gun Safety Policy in the New Congress](#)



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