

Department of Health Updates

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West Virginia Academy of Family Physicians (WVAFP)
72nd Annual Scientific Assembly
Embassy Suites, Charleston, W.Va.



- The former West Virginia Department of Health and Human Services (DHHR) officially split up into three different agencies on January 1, 2024.
- After serving as Interim Secretary of DHHR through the transition, I became Cabinet Secretary of the newly created Department of Health (DH).
- Two other agencies were also created as a result of the split – West Virginia Dept. of Human Services (DoHS) and West Virginia Dept. of Health Facilities (DHF).
- New, smaller chains of command for each agency allow for greater oversight and accountability of the important services being provided to W.Va. residents.

W.Va. Dept. of Health Reorganization



The Office of Emergency Medical Services and Center for Threat Preparedness separated from Bureau for Public Health and reports to the department.

The Department of Health is comprised of:

- Bureau for Public Health
- Office of Emergency Medical Services
- Office of the Chief Medical Examiner
- Center for Threat Preparedness
- Health Care Authority
- Office of the Inspector General
- Human Rights Commission

Boards and Commissions: Developmental Disabilities Council, WV Advisory Council on Rare Diseases, WV Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and WV Governor's Early Intervention Interagency Coordinating Council

New efforts to curb underage vaping – If signed by Governor, H.B. 5084 codifies a federal law prohibiting the sale of tobacco products to anyone under the age of 21. West Virginia’s legislation also prohibits sale of e-cigarettes, e-cigars, e-pipes, vape pens, e-hookahs, filters, rolling paper, blunt, hemp wraps and pipes to those underage.

Smoking in cars with children ban – West Virginia, with the highest rate of adult cigarette use in nation, will become 12th state to ban smoking in vehicles with children if legislation passed during 2024 session is signed by the Governor.

Support for EMS – Legislature passed “treat-in-place” bill which would allow EMS responding to patients covered by private insurance to bill for services rendered even if a patient is not admitted to hospital for care.

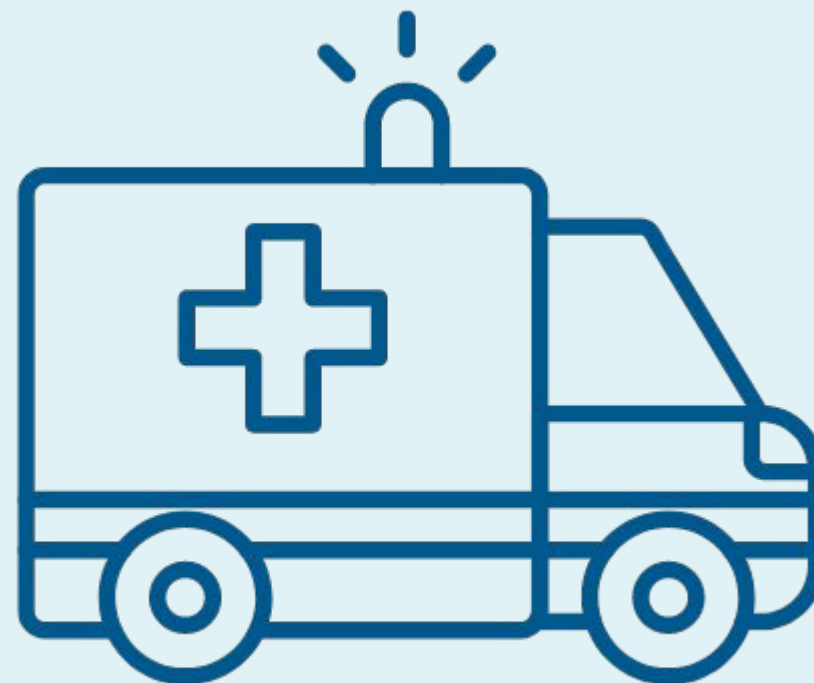
Creation of state Alzheimer’s plan task force – Within 24 months, the bill calls for a plan engaging statewide stakeholders to be presented to the legislature and Governor.

Emergency medical services personnel to become certified paramedics – bill establishes a grant program for equipment, training of emergency medical services providers and personnel. Open to all emergency medical services personnel and providers with priority granted to rural and volunteer emergency medical providers.

Answer the Call

The Governor's initiative offered no-cost education and training for emergency medical technician (EMT) careers through a variety of providers across West Virginia and invested in test preparation software to increase certification examination success.

As a result of the initiative, the state's EMS workforce expanded by nearly 75 percent.

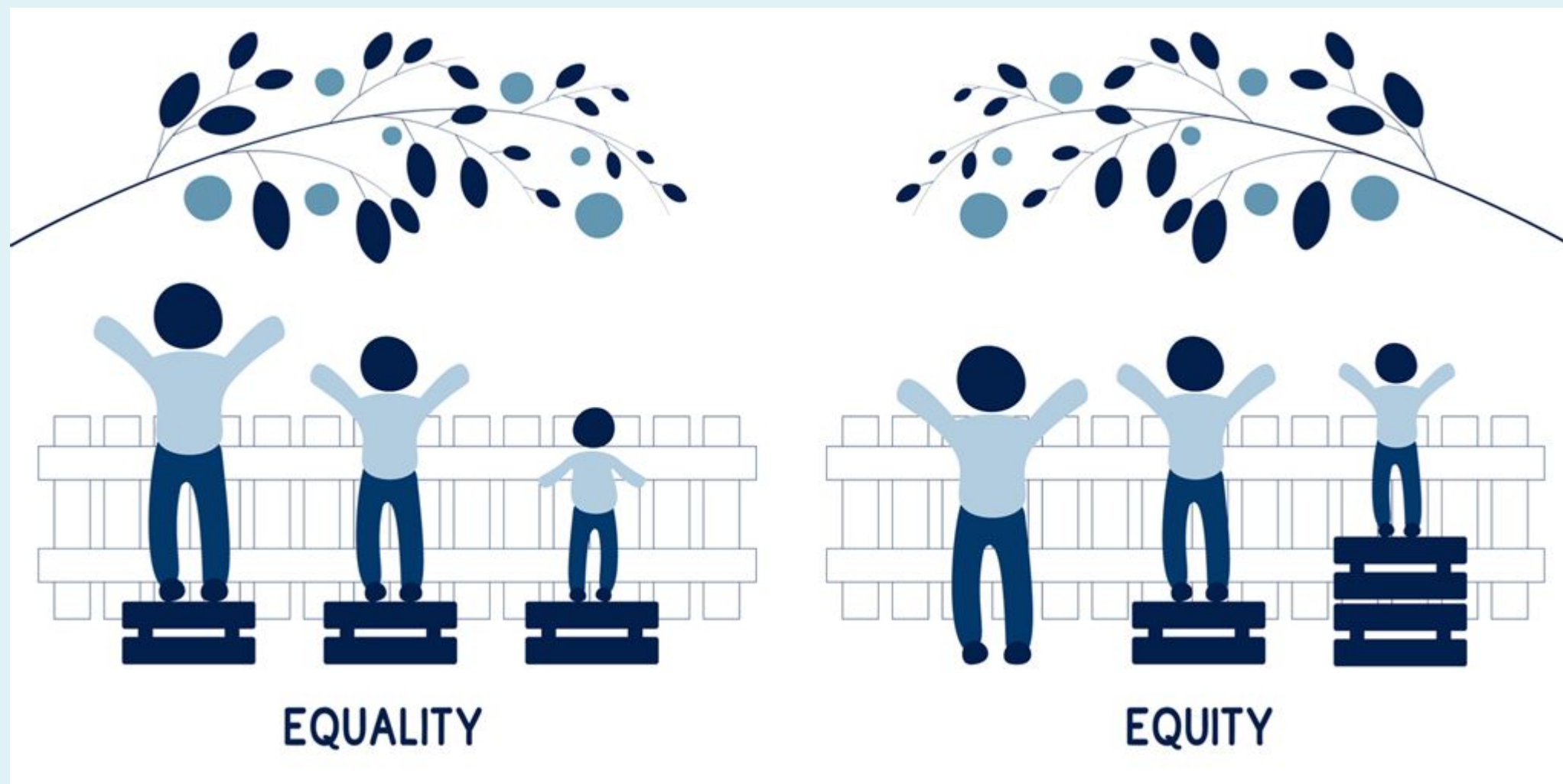


Priorities For The New Department



- Addressing vacancies and streamlining services to West Virginians
- Securing feedback from West Virginians, staff, and stakeholders
- Implementing State Public Health Improvement Plan
- Evaluating emergency plans
- Developing relationships with community partners

- A data-driven and community-based approach to health care cannot be a one size fits all approach



Success of State Health Improvement Plan depends on feedback from frontlines. We want to hear from you.

- What are areas for improvement?
- What could we be doing better?
- What are problems that need addressed?

Contact



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