



**Mission:**

*To work collaboratively on policies and practices in and around schools that promote equity and improve the physical, social and emotional health and well-being of children, youth and families.*

**Steering Committee:**

- Advocacy Action Network
- Aetna Better Health of Kentucky
- Alliance for a Healthier Generation
- American Academy of Pediatrics-KY Chapter
- American Heart Association
- Anthem Medicaid
- Bounce Coalition
- Cairn Guidance Inc.
- Cumberland Family Medical Center, Inc.
- Dept. Behavioral Health, Dev. & Intellectual Disabilities
- Feeding Kentucky
- Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky
- GLSEN – Bluegrass Chapter
- Gordon Food service
- Kentucky Humana Healthy Horizons
- Kentucky Association for School Social Work
- Kentucky Association of School Admins
- Kentucky Council on Problem Gambling
- Kentucky Dept. for Medicaid Services\*
- Kentucky Dept. for Public Health\*
- Kentucky Dept. of Education\*
- Kentucky Health Departments Association
- Kentucky Nurses Association
- Kentucky Primary Care Association
- Kentucky Public Health Association
- Kentucky Strengthening Families/ KYDPH\*
- Kentucky Psychological Association
- Kentucky Voices for Health
- Kentucky Youth Advocates
- Kentucky PTA – 16<sup>th</sup> District
- Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence
- Seven Counties Services Inc.
- Spalding University
- St. Elizabeth Healthcare
- Trans Parent Lex
- United Healthcare
- University of Kentucky
- University of Louisville

\*State Agencies are Ex-Officio Non-Voting members acting in a technical assistance capacity.



December 19, 2023

Dear Members of the Kentucky General Assembly,

The opportunity to improve the health of all Kentuckians exists right now. Bold actions need to be taken this legislative session to do so. Our nation is spending trillions and our state billions of dollars on healthcare costs because we aren't strongly investing in keeping people healthy nor intervening as early as possible. We will only be increasing these "sickcare" costs if we don't address the unprecedented challenges that Kentucky's children and youth are facing. Intervening to improve children's health is the proven most effective way of reducing the human and economic costs of poor health and providing Kentucky with a better future.

Kentucky's children and youth have worrisome and rising rates of mental health conditions - including suicide attempts, childhood obesity, and vaping, to name three issues which need to be immediately addressed to stop and reverse these dramatic trends. If these issues go unaddressed, with all certainty we will only increase the number of Kentuckians with chronic disease, addiction, and earlier death.

The Kentucky Coalition for Healthy Children (KCHC) has developed its **2024 Children's Health Policy Priorities** which accompany this letter. This document contains data showing the impact of these important health issues, followed by policy recommendations for legislative action to address them.

The Kentucky Coalition for Healthy Children was formed in 2019 as a cross-sector, public-private partnership committed to improving children's health in the school setting. Our vision is that ALL children and youth in Kentucky are healthy, safe, and engaged, with opportunities to develop their full potential. We are committed to advocating for evidence-based policies and programs to achieve this goal. The 38 organizations that comprise the steering committee of the KCHC and our more than 170 members urge the General Assembly to review the Coalition's policy recommendations for the 2024 legislative session and take immediate action to improve the health of our children and youth and in doing so, to ensure a healthier Kentucky for our future.

We greatly appreciate your commitment to improving the health of Kentucky's children and youth and look forward to working together to achieve this goal. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me or my staff with any questions you may have or for more information.

Sincerely,

Ben Chandler  
Chair, Kentucky Coalition for Healthy Children  
President and CEO, Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky