



# Strategic **Plan**

2024–2027



SOUTH CAROLINA  
DEPARTMENT OF  
PUBLIC HEALTH

[DPH.SC.GOV/STRATEGICPLAN](https://dph.sc.gov/strategicplan)

“ A *strategic plan* defines and determines the health department’s roles, priorities, and direction over a set period of time. The *strategic plan* provides a roadmap to foster a shared understanding among staff to align towards contributing to what the department plans to achieve, how it will achieve it, and how it will know whether efforts are *successful*. ”

— *Public Health Accreditation Board*

# Introduction

The South Carolina Department of Public Health (DPH) is dedicated and committed to our mission to **protect, promote, and improve the health and well-being of everyone in South Carolina** and vision of **healthy people living in healthy communities**.

Our strategic plan unites and guides our agency towards achieving the mission and vision by setting strategic priorities and desired results for our agency. This includes supporting our ongoing work with our partners, communities, and others to help every South Carolinian have access to the resources and information they need to:

- have access to the highest-quality health care,
- make decisions that enhance their health, and
- improve their well-being.

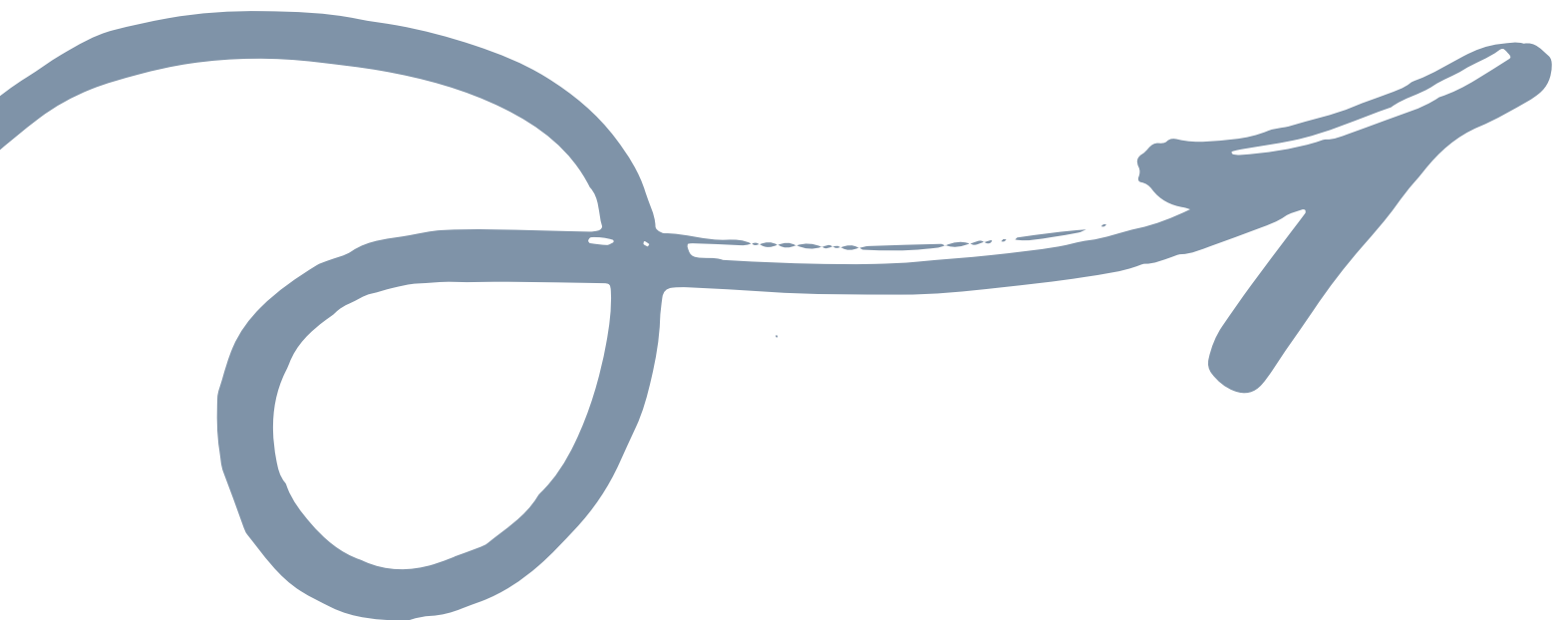
DPH's strategic plan is informed by the priorities outlined by our agency leadership with input from the staff, partners, and stakeholders at all levels, including through national, state, and local assessments and requirements. The plan is a living document that is reviewed and updated regularly to ensure it remains relevant, responsive, and impactful. The agency plan is implemented by our talented and dedicated team of employees who serve everyone in South Carolina.

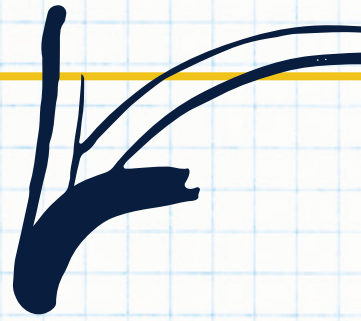
Working together across our agency and with our partners strengthens collective action and ensures that collaboration translates into measurable progress. These coordinated efforts create opportunities for greater alignment and contribute to making South Carolina a healthier state.



**“The Strategic Plan outlines our priority areas, result statements, and strategies that will guide our work. Everything we do should connect to our strategic plan in some way. Most importantly, it reinforces that every person at DPH contributes to our success. Regardless of where you work in our agency, your efforts are essential to advancing these priorities and improving health outcomes across South Carolina.”**

***—Dr. Edward Simmer, DPH Interim Director***





## *Mission*

**To protect, promote, and improve the health and well-being of everyone in South Carolina**

Our mission embodies our purpose and reason for our existence. We fulfill this mission through the programs we administer, the services we deliver, and the professional dedication we demonstrate each day to advance the health and well-being of all people in South Carolina.

## *Vision*

**Healthy people living in healthy communities**

This vision guides our agency's direction and priorities. To advance our vision, we provide high-quality direct services, educate and inform communities and partners, collect, analyze, and apply data to make informed decisions, and convene communities to implement strategies for better health outcomes.

## *How Do We Achieve Our Mission and Vision?*

We achieve our mission and vision through a comprehensive, people-first approach to public health. Our approach guides how we design programs, shape policies, and strengthens systems to support the health and well-being of everyone in South Carolina. Our work is grounded in the 10 Essential Public Health Services, a proven framework that helps us assess community needs, develop effective policies, and ensure the services and protections that keep people healthy. At the heart of our strategy is a people-first approach. We place the individuals, families, and communities we serve at the center of our work, acting as trusted stewards and champions for better health and quality of life across our state. We also recognize that caring for our communities starts with caring for our team. To serve others well, we must support, empower, and invest in the employees who carry out this critical work every day.

# Core Values

DPH Core Values define our identity and guide our conduct both within the workplace and in the communities we serve. They inform our decision-making processes and reflect our organizational beliefs about how we fulfill our mission.

We keep these core values in **SITE<sup>2</sup> (Service, Innovation, Teamwork, Excellence, Equity)** through the work we do each day.



## ***Embracing Service***

We embrace our responsibility to reliably serve our communities, customers, and each other in a respectful manner, relying upon clear and uncompromised commitments to integrity, trust, dependability, and responsiveness.



## ***Inspiring Innovation***

We encourage and empower our teams to find creative, science- and data-driven solutions to protect, promote and improve the health of the public.



## ***Promoting Teamwork***

We cultivate inclusive and collaborative teams that value the diverse thoughts, experiences, and expertise of every team member, our stakeholders, and our communities.



## ***Pursuing Excellence***

We are steadfast in our commitment to the highest achievable standards of quality and professionalism.



## ***Advancing Equity***

We are committed to giving all South Carolinians the opportunity to attain optimal health outcomes by fostering a culture of fairness, equity, and inclusion for everyone.



# *Strategic Priority Areas*

Our strategic priority areas are the high-level themes or categories that encompass how we accomplish our mission and vision. These priority areas help define the work we do and the things we intend to focus on and accomplish throughout the lifespan of the strategic plan.

Based on input from staff and leadership, statewide health priorities, and an ongoing evaluation of current and future needs, we have identified four strategic priority areas to carry out our mission.



## ***Health Services & Care***

Improving population health outcomes by minimizing disparities and providing, facilitating, and promoting access to high-quality healthcare services that meet our communities' needs.



## ***Preparation & Response***

Protecting the health of the state by monitoring and assessing data trends to address population health risks, preparing for emerging threats, and guiding public health emergency preparation, response, and recovery efforts.



## ***Public Health Infrastructure***

Striving for operational excellence by building and sustaining a diverse and skilled public health workforce, and improving the coordination of systems, processes, and policies with internal and external stakeholders.



## ***Collaboration & Engagement***

Strengthening partnerships, aligning statewide efforts and initiatives, and engaging with all sectors and communities to promote trust and transparency.

# *Population Result Statements*

For each priority area, the agency has further identified result statements as desired well-being conditions for the population DPH serves. These desired results reflect long-term outcomes that further the agency's mission and vision.

This section contains our result statements and the strategies we will implement in collaboration with our partners and teams to drive meaningful progress towards these results.

## Health Services & Care

Result Statement 1.1	Everyone in SC has access to high-quality health services.
Result Statement 1.2	Everyone in SC has optimal health and well-being.

Strategies	
Strategy 1.1	Improve population health outcomes by minimizing disparities
Strategy 1.2	Provide, facilitate, and promote access to high-quality healthcare services that meet our communities' needs

## Preparation & Response

Result Statement 2.1	Everyone in SC is prepared for public health threats and emergencies.
Result Statement 2.2	Everyone in SC is informed about public health emergencies.
Result Statement 2.3	Everyone in SC lives in safe and resilient communities.

Strategies	
Strategy 2.1	Monitor and assess data trends to address population health risks
Strategy 2.2	Prepare for emerging threats
Strategy 2.3	Guide public health emergency preparation, response, and recovery efforts

## *Public Health Infrastructure*

Result Statement 3.1	All DPH customers are served by well-trained and skilled employees.
Result Statement 3.2	Everyone in SC is served by a modernized, data-driven public health system focused on improving the health of our communities.

Strategies	
Strategy 3.1	Build and sustain a skilled public health workforce
Strategy 3.2	Improve the coordination of systems, processes, and policies with internal and external stakeholders

## *Collaboration & Engagement*

Result Statement 4.1	Everyone in SC has access to community resources that promote healthy living.
Result Statement 4.2	Everyone in SC is served by a network of trusted public health partners.

Strategies	
Strategy 4.1	Strengthen partnerships
Strategy 4.2	Align statewide efforts and initiatives
Strategy 4.3	Engage with all sectors and communities to promote trust and transparency

# *Implementation & Measuring Success*

Effective implementation of the strategic plan advances DPH's strategic priority areas and drives progress toward the vision of healthy people living in healthy communities. Monitoring, reporting, and evaluating performance management data are central to DPH's approach to accountability, continuous improvement, and informed decision-making.

We are an agency that seeks innovative "without the box" approaches to challenges. We try new and innovative ideas. We measure and evaluate what we do, and we use that information to expand successful ideas, make changes when needed, and discontinue programs that are not useful. Trying a new idea that ultimately does not work is not failure; failure is not trying!

## *Performance Monitoring & Oversight*

DPH uses a performance management system that enables the agency to track, analyze, and visualize progress toward results and key performance measures. The performance management system serves as the agency's primary method for monitoring strategic priorities, result statements, indicators, and performance measures. All strategic priority areas, result statements, and performance measures are entered into the performance management system by teams across the agency.

DPH measures progress towards the agency's priorities and desired results using the performance management system. Performance data entered into the performance management system are routinely reviewed by staff and leaders across the agency. Additionally, staff dedicated to strategy, performance management and quality improvement monitors the performance data and identify areas where quality improvement methodologies may be implemented to ensure the agency's goals and objectives are achieved.

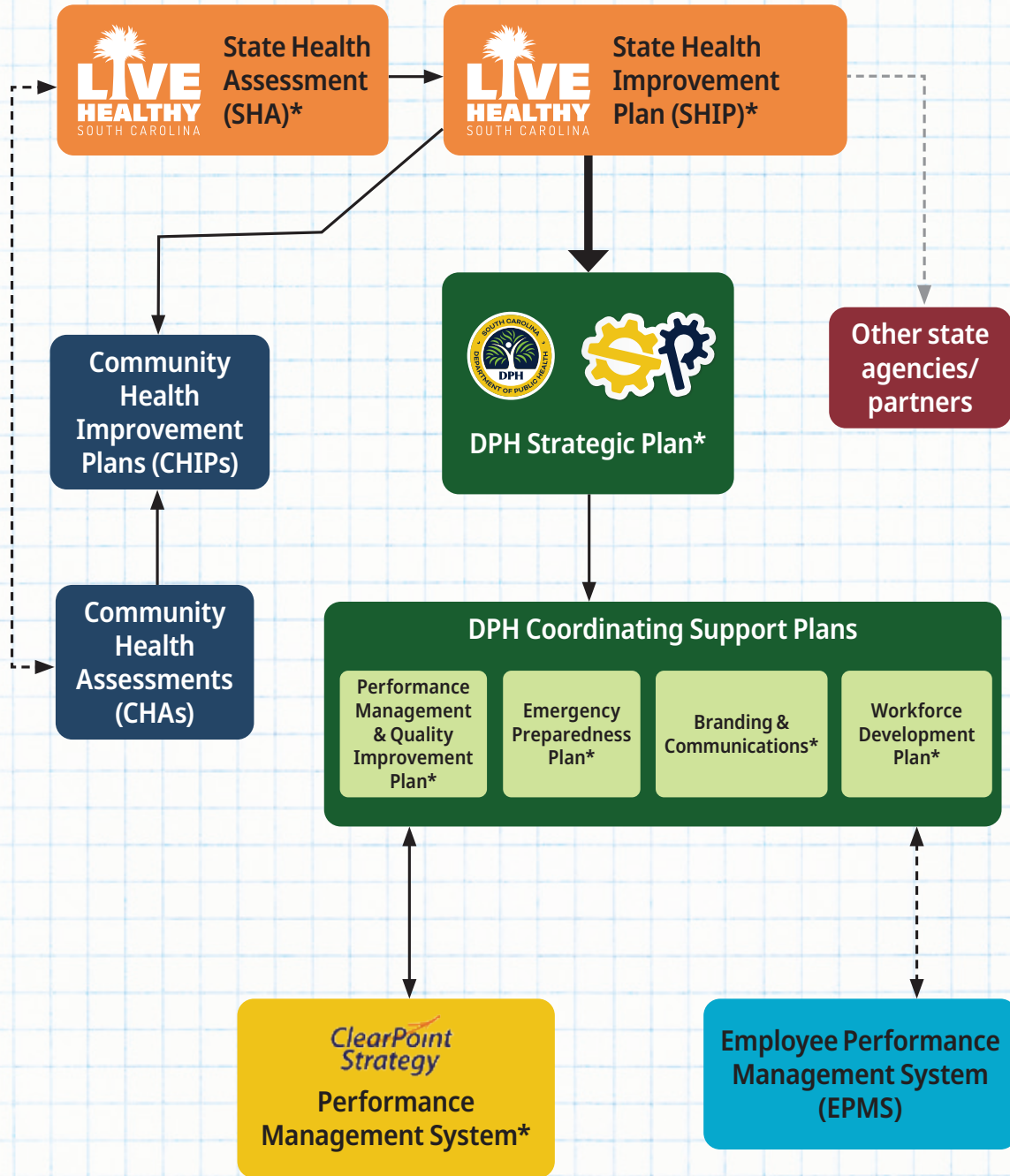
# *Aligning Statewide Efforts & Initiatives*

Our strategic planning process begins with the [State Health Assessment \(SHA\)](#), a comprehensive analysis of statewide population health data. Community Health Assessments (CHAs) and Community Health Improvement Plans (CHIPs) are incorporated as data inputs within the SHA along with additional quantitative and qualitative sources. The SHA evaluates state-level outcomes, health risks, and protective factors for South Carolina. The [State Health Improvement Plan \(SHIP\)](#) is then developed using the findings from the SHA and in collaboration with multi-sector partnerships from across the state to identify priority areas and evidence-based strategies. The SHIP provides a roadmap for collaborative action among state agencies, community partners, and stakeholders to improve health outcomes statewide.

As South Carolina's public health agency, DPH also protects and improves public health by enforcing and promoting compliance with public health laws, regulations, and standards, and by applying legal and regulatory actions that safeguard our communities. Some of our services (including those that promote health) include providing vital health care services, coordinating disease control, supporting healthy nutrition, inspecting health care facilities, responding to natural disasters, providing research and statistics on the state's health, and much more.

DPH uses these collaborative efforts as the foundation for our strategic plan, aligning our priorities with the statewide SHIP, a five-year plan that was published in October 2025. Figure 1. illustrates how our strategic plan aligns with statewide priorities established through input from communities, partners, and the Live Healthy Coalition. From this foundation, DPH will create coordinating support plans, including Performance Management & Quality Improvement, Emergency Preparedness, Branding & Communications, and Workforce Development Plans, in alignment with the Public Health Accreditation Board requirements.

Figure 1. Strategic Plan Alignment



\*required for PHAB accreditation

# *Grounded In Strategy, Moving Forward Together*

DPH developed its 2024–2027 Strategic Plan through a deliberate, collaborative, and evidence-informed process designed to ensure alignment with organizational priorities and statewide public health goals. A dedicated strategy workgroup guided the planning effort, with direction and oversight from the Senior Leadership Team and Executive Leadership Team. To ensure the plan reflects both current needs and emerging trends, DPH conducted a comprehensive environmental scan of national, state, and local assessments, reviewed existing strategic plans, and considered ASTHO’s Top 10 State Public Health Issues to Watch in 2024.

The plan is grounded in the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) standards and measures for reaccreditation, aligned with the State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP), and structured using a Result-Based Accountability (RBA) framework. This approach defines clear results, indicators, and performance measures to support accountability and continuous improvement.

Staff engagement was a central component of the planning process. Employees voted on the agency’s mission and vision, contributed input to the development of result statements, and participated in focus groups to help identify indicators and strategies.

Through this inclusive and coordinated approach, DPH’s Strategic Plan serves as a unified roadmap to guide collective efforts in ***protecting, promoting, and improving the health and well-being of everyone in South Carolina.***

## *Overarching Planning Process and Framework*

DPH’s strategic planning process is ongoing and continuous, enabling the agency to adapt, improve, and respond to emerging public health needs over time. The process is grounded in nationally recognized best practices outlined by PHAB and reinforced by priorities identified in the SHIP.

The strategic planning framework strengthens connections between community partnerships, core state and agency planning efforts, and organizational performance management and assessment activities. This integrated approach promotes coordination, accountability, and measurable impact across the public health system.

As an accredited public health agency, DPH is committed to fostering a culture of continuous improvement that empowers staff to deliver services, educate communities, steward data, and serve as effective conveners. We remain committed to working alongside partners to build healthier, stronger, and safer communities for everyone in South Carolina, regardless of circumstances or where they live.









*Read more about the 2024–2027 Strategic Plan,  
how we got here, and where we're going.*

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