



Virginia Public Health Association 2023 Impact Report

Designed by: Brita Allen, MPH

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

Thank you.

VPHA's Immediate Past-President, Kim Baskette, opened last year's Impact Report with a message of gratitude, and I could not think of a better way to introduce this year's report. Once again, we grew our impact and took big strides to meet our mission. And once again, we have our members, volunteers, and partners to thank for our success.

I can say with total confidence that 2023 was VPHA's strongest year yet. We wrote in last year's report that the association would launch a mentorship program, complete a strategic plan, build on policy wins, host an Annual Conference, and grow and diversify our membership. We accomplished every single one of those goals and more. We welcomed several new organizational members and significantly grew our net assets. The mentorship program was a hit, and the program's second cohort launched in February. The Annual Conference was our largest and most impactful yet, with extraordinary speakers and presenters from across the Commonwealth. We were one of only sixteen organizations, and the only American Public Health Association state affiliate, to secure grant funding to implement a Racial Justice Competency Model pilot. Finally, we watched as non-physician public health professionals began leading local health districts, a direct result of our advocacy for the public health profession. These are just some of our accomplishments in 2023.

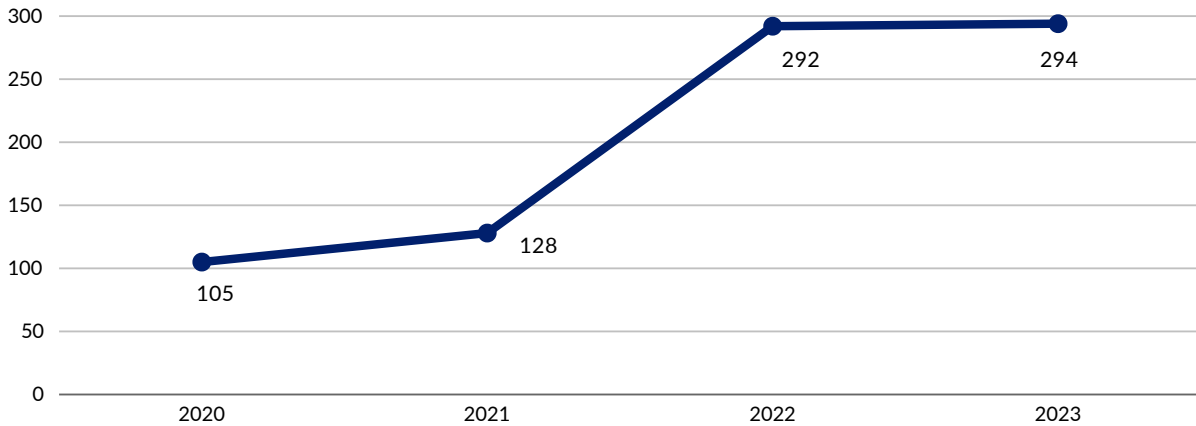
This will be a pivotal year. VPHA remains an all-volunteer association, and while we will continue to grow our impact through our programs and activities, we must also sustain our work. One of our top priorities this year is to raise enough funds to hire an Executive Director. We will need your support more than ever to achieve this goal.

I believe more than ever that the work we do is essential. I am so grateful to our members, volunteers and partners for their continued support, and I am excited for everything we will accomplish this year to improve the health of all Virginians.

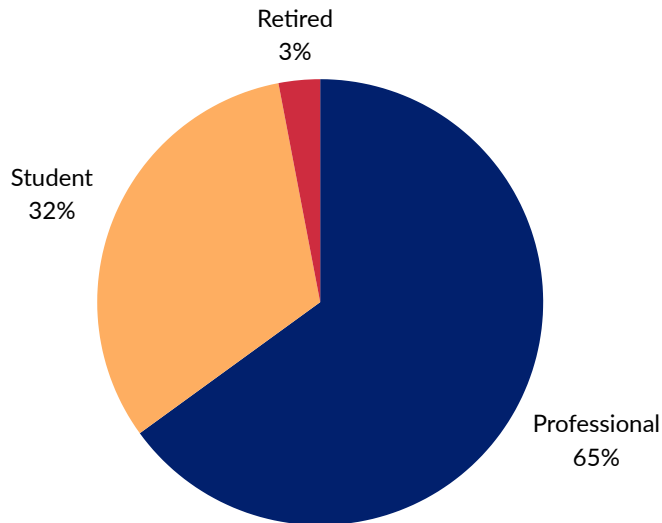
In Good Health,
Ben Barber

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

VPHA's members are central to our work. We are maintaining our high numbers and making strides to bring in more people. *Note: figures do not include members with pending renewal dates.*

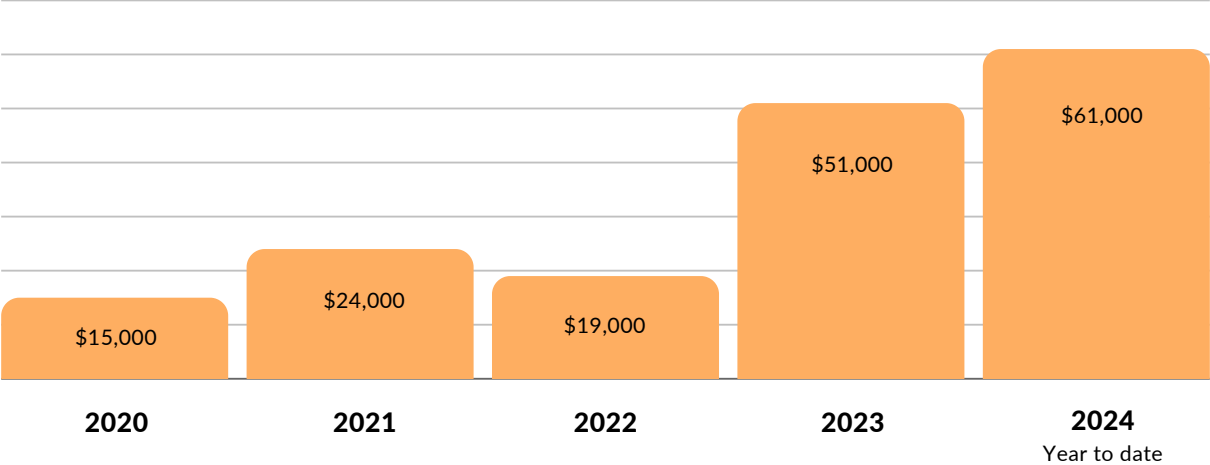


Our members include active and retired public health professionals and students from across Virginia. We look forward to growing our membership in 2024!



FINANCIAL REPORT

VPHA significantly grew its net assets in 2023. The association is on track to continue growing its financial sustainability in 2024.



MEET VPHA'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS

VPHA is lucky to have a strong, diverse Board of Directors of public health champions throughout Virginia. Their skills and experience are essential to the association's success.



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Policy Director
 Virginia Health Catalyst



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Vice President
Executive Director
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MEET VPHA'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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**Affiliate Representative to the
Governing Council**
*Principal & Founder
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Vanessa Walker Harris, MD

*Director
Office of Family Health Services,
Virginia Department of Health*

THANK YOU FOR SERVING ON THE BOARD

Finally, we owe a large debt of gratitude to our departing Board members. VPHA's success would not be possible without their service! We will miss working with them and wish them all the best in their future endeavors.

Kerry Redican, PhD, MSPH, MPH, CHES

*Professor and Director, Undergraduate Program in
Public Health
Department of Population Health Sciences, College
of Veterinary Medicine
Virginia Tech*

Ashley Tharpe, EdD, MPH, MA, MS, CHES

*Online Dean, School of Health Sciences
Liberty University*

*Views and opinions shared do not represent or endorse FDA/CTP's positions or policies.

OUR IMPACT

VPHA's mission is to strengthen public health practice, foster health equity, and promote sound public health policy. We are pleased to share that we had a significant impact in each of these pillars.

Strengthening Public Health Practice

Mentorship Program

VPHA's Virtual Mentorship Pilot Program successfully launched in Spring 2023 with 18 participants (graduate students and new professionals). The program hosted six events – three formal webinars and three networking events. The formal webinars focused on job hunting skills, professional relationships and transitioning from school to work. The networking events gave the mentees a chance to talk with public health professionals who shared their expertise and experience. The program launched again in February 2024 with a larger cohort and a new, one-on-one mentor-mentee component.

"I really enjoyed being a part of the mentorship program as an early career/mid-level professional mentee. I gained a plethora of knowledge in resume writing, interviewing techniques, and navigating the workplace. I am serving as a mentor in this year's cohort, and I am looking forward to helping other VPHA members have a positive experience like I did."

- Samantha Leigh, MA, MPH, CHES
Director of Practicum, Department of Public and Community Health
Liberty University

Annual Conference

VPHA's Annual Conference was a highlight of 2023. Over 150 participants gathered to share their knowledge and celebrate efforts to improve public health in Virginia. Our fabulous keynote speakers, Dr. Chris Chanyasulkit, Immediate Past-President of the American Public Health Association, and Dr. Karen Shelton, Virginia's State Health Commissioner, inspired the attendees. Our members hosted 10+ breakout sessions on a wide variety of public health topics and students and public health professionals presented their work during the poster session. We also had an amazing group of sponsors that provided the funding and support to make the conference a success. And most importantly, we all celebrated public health and each other's accomplishments.



VPHA members at the 2023 VPHA Annual Conference.

OUR IMPACT

Fostering Health Equity

All of Us Research Grant

The National Institute of Health's All of Us Project Research Program is an ambitious and important attempt to improve health care and health equity through research. The program is gathering health data from one million people living in the United States to accelerate research that may improve health through precision medicine initiatives.

The American Public Health Association awarded VPHA \$10,000 in grant funding to support this historic program. In 2023, VPHA hosted APHA representatives at its Annual Conference to share a presentation about the program and host a table to recruit members who may be interested in participating in the program. VPHA will host another event in support of the program in early 2024, so stay tuned for more information!

Racial Justice Competency Model Grant

The Public Health Training Center Network and National Network of Public Health Institutes awarded VPHA a stipend to participate in the Racial Justice Competency Model (RJCM) Pilot Program in 2023-2024. VPHA was one of 16 recipients and the only state public health association to receive a stipend. VPHA's Health Equity Committee is using the RJCM to audit the organization's strategic plan and pre-assess how racial justice and equity are incorporated into our current practices and programs. Once the baseline is established, the committee will make recommendations to VPHA's Board on how to develop an action plan for implementation and evaluation.



OUR IMPACT

Promoting Sound Public Health Policy

Advocating for Public Health Professionals - SB 192

Most policy work is implementation. This maxim was certainly the case with respect to SB 192. The Virginia General Assembly approved this bill, which allows qualified public health professionals without a medical degree to lead local health departments (LHDs), in 2022. When SB 192 passed, nearly one-third of Virginia's 35 local health districts did not have a permanent director, affecting roughly 1.5 million Virginians.

This focus paid off. The Virginia Department of Health began posting LHD Director positions open to qualified public health professionals in the beginning of 2023, and we are thrilled to share that there are at least three qualified public health professionals leading local health districts in Virginia. We are thrilled for them and for all public health professionals who can hold these crucial positions.

Protecting Public Health

It is no secret that public health has been under threat. Many states have passed misguided laws that arbitrarily limit how public health professionals can respond to public health crises. It is crucial that these policies not come to Virginia.

The American Public Health Association awarded VPHA a grant to protect public health. We used the funds to:

- Develop an issue brief, "[Let Public Health Professionals Do Their Jobs](#)," that we shared with every candidate for legislative office in Virginia;
- Host an advocacy training for VPHA members so they could feel empowered to advocate for themselves and their communities' in defense of public health; and
- Facilitate meetings with VPHA Board members and key legislators to inform them of our work and the importance of protecting public health.

This work led to policymakers being more informed about public health priorities and VPHA's growing role in advocating for them. APHA recognized this impact and awarded VPHA a second, larger grant, to build upon this work.

LOOKING AHEAD

This is a pivotal year for VPHA. We are already hard at work planning our 2024 Annual Conference, advocating for public health, and supporting our members through the mentorship program and other networking activities.

While we will continue to grow our impact through our programs and activities, we must also focus on building the infrastructure to sustain our work. That starts with raising enough funds to hire an Executive Director. We made great strides toward this goal in 2023, nearly tripling our net assets and diversifying our revenue sources.

We are on track to raise more funds in 2024, but we need your help. Please join us if you are not already a member. Already a member or interested in contributing in a different way? Consider sponsoring VPHA's Annual Conference or making a tax-deductible donation to support our work. Your support is crucial to helping VPHA improve the health of all Virginians!

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VPHA Social Hour at the 2023 APHA Annual Conference.



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