



## LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES – 2022

Updated 1/20/22

The list below represents a collection of legislative issues that are aligned with Vitalyst's Public Policy Agenda. Whereas public policy plays a significant role in shaping Arizonans' ability to achieve health, Vitalyst may engage in the following matters during this legislative session.

### **CARE COORDINATION:**

**Home and Community-Based Services** – *Creating a true continuum of care within and beyond traditional healthcare settings.* In accordance with provisions of the American Rescue Plan Act, Arizona's Medicaid Program has an opportunity to generate over \$1B in federal funds. These funds would enhance the current HCBS system and advance technologies to support greater connections between medical and social services. AHCCCS will be seeking legislative approval to expend these federal funds.

**Strengthening 2-1-1** – *Building a robust referral system for Arizonans to access community-based services.* 2-1-1 Arizona will be working with state officials to obtain additional funding for its core operations, thereby creating a stronger statewide system that connects Arizonans to resources.

### **CHILD DEVELOPMENT**

**Child Care Assistance** – *Investing in child care to ensure that quality, affordable options are available to Arizona's families.* Legislation will be introduced to secure additional state funding for child care assistance, and to expand eligibility to job seekers and full time students.

**Healthy Families Arizona Program** – *Providing supports to expectant and new parents facing stressors and risk factors that could lead to adverse childhood experiences.* The program, offered by Arizona Department of Child Safety, provides home visitation services and supports with the intent of improving the home environment and reducing abuse and neglect. Partners will be seeking additional state investment in the program.

### **EVIDENCE-BASED PUBLIC HEALTH:**

**Tobacco Cessation** – *Preventing tobacco use among Arizonans.* Partners will be working to establish a statewide tobacco retail license to ensure that tobacco vendors are following standards when selling tobacco products. Efforts are likely to include opposition to tobacco industry-backed bills which attempt to preempt local regulation of tobacco licenses.

**Vaccinations** – *Protecting Arizonans from communicable disease outbreaks.* Bills will be introduced to remove governmental authority to protect the public's health. These include the creation of additional flexibilities for vaccine exemptions, bans on vaccine requirements, and the stripping of authorities from the Arizona Department of Health Services to respond during public health emergencies.

### **HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE:**

**Oral Health Coverage** – *Ensuring that all Arizonans have access to quality, affordable oral health services.* AHCCCS currently provides limited coverage for emergency dental services. Advocates will be seeking legislation requiring AHCCCS to cover comprehensive oral health coverage for pregnant women.

A CATALYST FOR COMMUNITY HEALTH

**Post-Partum Coverage Extension** – Ensuring that all Arizonans have access to quality, affordable health care services. Partners are looking to extend AHCCCS postpartum coverage from 60 days to a full year after pregnancy.

**Children’s Health Insurance Coverage** – Ensuring that all Arizonans have access to quality, affordable health care services. Advocates are discussing ways to expand income eligibility for KidsCare and remove initial waiting periods.

#### **HEALTHCARE WORKFORCE:**

**Alleviating Healthcare Workforce Shortages** – Collectively identifying solutions to Arizona’s healthcare workforce shortages. Partners will be pursuing state funding for nursing workforce solutions including, but not limited to enhanced loan repayment options; support for nursing faculty expansion in post-secondary institutions; expanded nurse preceptorships; and models akin to nurse residency programs.

#### **HEALTHY FOOD ENVIRONMENTS:**

**Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Benefits** – Expanding access to healthy, affordable foods for all Arizonans. Current Arizona statute prohibits access to SNAP benefits for individuals with prior drug felonies on their record. Partners will be introducing legislation to remove this ban.

#### **HOUSING:**

**Arizona Housing Trust Fund** – Development and maintenance of quality, affordable housing for Arizonans who need it most. This effort seeks to add funds to the Arizona Housing Trust Fund, which can be used for housing supports, development and a variety of other housing solutions.

**Attainable Housing** – Increasing the availability of quality, affordable housing that enables low-to-moderate income households to live in the same communities in which they work. Current Arizona statute allows rural school districts to allocate funds and property toward the development, procurement and maintenance of housing options for their staff. Partners will be introducing legislation to expand these “teacherages” to urban and suburban areas.

**Sealing Dismissed Evictions** – Increasing access to quality, affordable housing. Legislation will be introduced requiring courts to seal all tenant records related to evictions which have been dismissed.

#### **TRANSPORTATION:**

**Maricopa County Ballot Initiative** – Increasing the availability of quality, affordable transportation options. Maricopa County will seek legislative authority to run a ballot initiative to fund the County’s transportation plan over the next 20 years.

#### **OTHER LEGISLATION CONNECTED TO VITALYST’S CORE VALUES & MISSION**

**Discrimination Against LGBTQ+ Communities in Arizona** - Vitalyst holds equity as both a core organizational value and a critical pillar in our ingredients for change. To solve Arizona’s greatest health problems, we need to pursue policies that focus first on supporting Arizonans experiencing the greatest health disparities. That also means we need to stand in opposition to policies that further jeopardize the health of historically marginalized populations.