



**Disability
Health
Action
Network**

Disability Health Action Network

2026 – 2027 Action Plan

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Executive Summary

The Disability Health Action Network (DHAN) is a statewide collaborative initiative by The Arc of Pennsylvania, committed to advancing the health and wellbeing of people with disabilities in Pennsylvania. Established following statewide efforts to address inequities experienced by people with disabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic, DHAN continues this work by fostering effective communication among stakeholders, promoting equitable access to quality healthcare, and enhancing overall health outcomes.

By forging partnerships among people with disabilities, physical, oral, and behavioral healthcare professionals, disability stakeholders, advocacy groups, government agencies, researchers, and community organizations, DHAN strengthens our collective ability to address the multifaceted healthcare needs of people with disabilities.

Purpose & Objectives

Purpose Statement

The Disability Health Action Network (DHAN) is a statewide collaborative initiative committed to advancing the health and well-being of individuals with disabilities in Pennsylvania by promoting equity of physical, oral, and behavioral healthcare and disability inclusiveness in emergency preparedness planning.

Key Objectives

Foster effective communication between stakeholders.

DHAN seeks to foster partnerships across sectors and with people who have lived experience of disability to strengthen our collective ability to address the multifaceted healthcare needs of individuals with disabilities. DHAN recognizes the potential to improve health outcomes through the power of communication and collaboration.

Promote equitable access to healthcare.

DHAN seeks to promote equitable access to quality healthcare by dismantling barriers experienced by people with disabilities, including physical accessibility, communication barriers, and discrimination. Through collaboration, advocacy, and shared learning, DHAN advances more inclusive healthcare environments that promote respect and optimal health outcomes for people with disabilities.

Enhance overall health outcomes.

DHAN seeks to enhance overall health outcomes for people with disabilities across Pennsylvania. By advancing collaboration, education, and innovative approaches, DHAN aims to improve the quality of healthcare and support people with disabilities in leading fulfilling and healthy lives.

Structure

DHAN is structured to support statewide communication, cross-sector collaboration, and coordinated action. The network includes an Advisory Committee and Work Groups, with The Arc of Pennsylvania serving as the coordinating organization. People with lived experience of disability are included throughout the network to help ensure that DHAN's priorities and activities reflect the perspectives of the communities it seeks to support.

Advisory Committee

The Advisory Committee provides strategic guidance, identifies emerging issues and opportunities, shares information about related initiatives, and helps establish priorities for the network. Members also connect DHAN with the communities, organizations, and systems they represent. Advisory Committee members may participate in Work Groups but are not required to do so.

Work Groups

Work Groups provide focused opportunities to examine priority issues, exchange knowledge, and advance collaborative activities. They are established according to priorities identified by the Advisory Committee and may change from one action-plan year to the next as needs, opportunities, and emerging issues evolve.

Participation is open to anyone interested in contributing to a Work Group's area of focus. Work Group participation does not automatically include Advisory Committee membership. This flexible structure allows DHAN to engage people with lived experience of disability, professionals, organizations, and community members based on their interests and expertise.

The following Work Group focus areas were chosen for 2026-2027:

- Technological Innovation
- Workforce
- Equitable Access

Goals

The goals for 2026 – 2027 are organized by the Work Group that will take the lead in advancing each area. While each goal has a designated Work Group lead, DHAN's progress depends on collaboration across all Work Groups and the Advisory Committee. **By July 31, 2027, DHAN will work to:**

Technological Innovation

1. Complete Phase 2 development of the DHAN Resource Finder – a multi-filter search engine that improves access to disability-inclusive resources collected through DHAN's 2025–2026 Work Groups.
2. Develop and implement a *DHAN Resource Hub Awareness Campaign* to increase awareness and use of the Hub among the disability community.
3. Promote the disability-informed, ethical, and accessible use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in healthcare.
 - I. Education: Increase awareness and understanding of related opportunities, risks, and considerations.
 - II. Policy & Advocacy: Advocate for related recommendations and policies.

Workforce

4. Expand and evaluate the *Disability-Inclusive Healthcare Communication Campaign* to increase healthcare professionals' understanding of disability health equity and connect them with established disability-inclusive educational resources.
5. Strengthen opportunities to expand disability-inclusive healthcare curriculum within continuing education (CE) and continuing medical education (CME).

Equitable Access

6. Advance disability-informed strategies to strengthen the collection, accessibility, and use of disability health data in Pennsylvania.
7. Promote meaningful disability representation in the development and implementation of Pennsylvania's State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP).

Advisory Committee Member Organizations

Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP)

Disability Rights Pennsylvania

Geisinger Health

Institute on Disabilities, University Center of Excellence on Developmental Disabilities,
Temple University

National Institute of Rural and Minority Health (NIRMH)

PA Coalition for Oral Health

PA Department of Aging – Aging and Disability Resource Office

PA Department of Health

PA Department of Human Services/Healthy Moms, Vibrant Futures PA

PA Department of Human Services/Office of Developmental Programs (ODP)

PA Office of the Governor

Rehabilitation and Community Providers Association (RCPA)

Social Impact Studio Consulting, LLC

Special Olympics Pennsylvania*

SPIN, Inc.*

The Arc of Blair County

The Arc of Pennsylvania*

The Arc of Philadelphia

UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh*

WellSpan Health

William Penn Human Services

Woods System of Care

**Indicates representation from people with disabilities*

DHAN is an initiative by [The Arc of Pennsylvania](https://www.thearc.org/pennsylvania).