

# DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & DEPARTMENT OF DRUG AND ALCOHOL PROGRAMS BUDGET HEARING WRAP

Thursday, March 12, 2026



## **General Overview:**

Dr. Debra Bogen, Secretary of the Department of Health (DOH), and Dr. Latika Davis-Jones, Secretary of the Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs (DDAP), testified before the House Appropriations Committee today. House Republicans focused their questions on regulatory reform for hospitals and long-term care facilities, maternity deserts in rural Pennsylvania, and other public health concerns.

## **Key Takeaways:**

- For the Department of Health (DOH), the Governor is proposing General Fund spending of \$260.3 million for Fiscal Year 2026-27, an overall increase of \$740,000, or 0.3%, over the current fiscal year.
- For the Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs (DDAP), the Governor is proposing \$48.3 million in General Fund support, an overall increase of \$30,000, or 0.1%, over the current fiscal year.
- House Republicans focused their questions on how DOH is working to reduce unnecessary hospital regulations. Secretary Bogen agreed that regulations are a problem, especially for rural hospitals, and that updates need to be made.
  - Members also expressed concern on the unintended consequences of staffing ratio requirements in long-term care facilities, including challenges with hospital discharges. DOH stated it does not believe this is a problem, but added that legislators should bring concerns to the department.
- Maternal healthcare deserts continue to be a major issue facing rural Pennsylvania. Members stressed the importance of keeping current maternal health departments within hospitals open and, where possible, reopening them.
- Members also asked why DDAP uses name-brand Naloxone rather than generic brands, which are often the most cost-effective option.
- DDAP is responsible for administering the Opioid Settlement Fund. Members asked what role DDAP plays in determining how counties can use the funding, and learned that counties have many options on how to use the funding with little oversight from DDAP.
- When questioned about the Governor's plan to legalize recreational marijuana, Secretary Davis-Jones admitted that they are not tracking any substance use disorder impacts that may be associated with legalization.

## **Notable Q&A:**



Rep. Charity Krupa asks how the Governor's recreational marijuana proposal would impact public health and if it would lead to negative health outcomes and increased substance abuse.



Rep. Eric Nelson discusses maternal healthcare deserts, especially in rural PA.



Rep. Chad Reichard asks whether DDAP purchases name-brand or generic Naloxone.