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NATIONAL
ASSOCIATION OF
COUNTY & CITY
HEALTH OFFICIALS

May 23, 2007

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chairman, Senate Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations Subcommittee
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Harkin:

I am writing on behalf of the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) to endorse the Preventive Medicine and Public Health Training Act (S.1120). As the public health role has expanded to include greater involvement in emergency preparedness as well as more traditional public health activities like immunization and chronic disease prevention, it is essential that there be an available workforce to carry out these tasks.

Workforce shortages are projected to get worse, not better, in the near future. In its 2005 *Profile of Local Health Departments*, NACCHO found that of the 59% of local health departments (LHDs) surveyed that had determined when their employees would be eligible for retirement, 20% had staff eligible to retire in five years. In addition, 64% of LHD top executives surveyed were older than age 50.

This bill would provide much needed support to public health departments, schools of public health, medical schools, hospitals and non-profit organizations to implement preventive medicine training programs for graduate medical residents. The Preventive Medicine and Public Health Training Act is one step forward towards a comprehensive strategy for addressing shortages in the public health workforce.

The nation's local health departments are grateful for your longstanding, unwavering support for prevention. Thank you for introducing this important legislation and we look forward to working with you to support local public health.

Sincerely,

Patrick M. Libbey
Executive Director