

NACCHO

National Association of County & City Health Officials

The National Connection for Local Public Health

January 14, 2013

Victoria J. Davey, PhD, MPH, RN
Chief Public Health Officer
Clinical Public Health (10P3)
Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Dr. Davey:

On behalf of the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) I am writing to urge the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to reaffirm the importance to all of its health care facilities in achieving timely and complete reporting of reportable diseases and conditions. NACCHO represents approximately 2,800 local health departments across the country. These city, county, metropolitan, district, and tribal departments provide vital prevention, screening, and other care services that protect people from disease and disaster. The VA facilities are an important part of the healthcare provider network in our nation's communities, and are therefore important to public health surveillance activities.

NACCHO believes it is critical for surveillance purposes and identifying disease outbreaks and trends that reportable disease reports go to the health department of the county or community where the person with this diagnosed disease or condition resides. Although there may be minor differences between reportable disease lists between some of the states, a standard list of reportable diseases and conditions would most closely look like the list of the National Notifiable Disease Surveillance System (NNDSS) of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This list can be accessed at http://wwwn.cdc.gov/nndss/document/nndss_event_code_list_July_28_final.pdf. Although there may be variances in the reporting conventions between some states, often the first responders to a notice of a reportable disease is the local health department. Prevention and control activities, which are the focus of case investigations, are enhanced the earlier the cases are reported.

In addition to reporting communicable diseases, NACCHO also requests a similar continuation of efforts for timely and complete reporting of other conditions such as cancer, genetic diseases and birth defects, and vital records such as births and deaths.

NACCHO strongly supports the policy and activities of the VA to assure ongoing disease reporting for public health purposes and appreciate your assistance. If you have any questions about this, or perhaps if there are ways we might be helpful in this regard, please feel free to contact Paul Etkind, DrPH, MPH, the Director of Infectious Diseases at NACCHO and also the primary staff support for our Epidemiology Program. He can be reached at petkind@naccho.org or 202.507.4260.

Thank you for your attention to this matter of importance to protecting the public's health.

Sincerely,



Robert M. Pestronk, MPH
Executive Director