

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONNECTICUT EARN NATIONAL RECOGNITION FOR PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Connecticut receives statewide recognition as "Public Health Ready"

Hartford, Connecticut (September 17, 2013) – Connecticut Association of Directors of Health announced today that each of Connecticut's five Emergency Planning and Preparedness Regions have been recognized by the national organization representing local health departments for their ability to respond to public health emergencies. Connecticut is now the fourth state in the nation to achieve statewide recognition. In honor of the recognition, Governor Dannel P. Malloy has proclaimed Wednesday, September 18, 2013 as Public Health Ready Day in Connecticut.

The five regions, comprising all of the state's local health departments and health districts, met the comprehensive preparedness benchmarks required by Project Public Health Ready (PPHR), a unique partnership between National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). PPHR is a criteria-based public health preparedness program that assesses local health department capacity to plan for, respond to, and recover from public health emergencies. In collaboration with local public health officials and regional preparedness partners, CADH prepared and submitted PPHR applications for four of the state's five regions.

Charles Brown, Executive Director of the Connecticut Association of Directors of Health, stated, "The two-year application process provided a unique opportunity for local health departments and districts, emergency responders, hospitals, behavioral health staff and emergency management to be actively engaged and work collaboratively to better prepare the state for emergencies. The successful recognition of each region, along with their proven ability to work together to address real-world events, points to the value of the professional collaborations and partnerships that exist in Connecticut."

Connecticut Association of Directors of Health, a state affiliate of NACCHO, was subcontracted to complete four of the five PPHR applications on the basis of its expertise in PPHR criteria, its ability to develop corrective action plans where gaps were identified, and its capacity to develop both local and regional-based preparedness plans that outline an effective public health response in an emergency.

"All disasters strike locally, and local health departments are a critical part of any community's first response to disease outbreaks, emergencies, and acts of terrorism," said Robert Pestronk, NACCHO Executive Director. "NACCHO commends the state of Connecticut for being a model of public health emergency preparedness."

Applicants recognized by PPHR undergo a rigorous evaluation by peer review. PPHR required each region to meet a set of national standards for public health preparedness in three key areas: preparedness planning, workforce competency, and demonstration of all-hazards readiness

through exercises or a response to a real event. PPHR recognition confirms that Connecticut has a thorough and coordinated emergency response plan in place, that agency staff members are trained, and that the agency exercises the plan and uses it during public health emergencies.

In 2006, the DESPP Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS), in collaboration with local and state preparedness partners, established five Planning and Preparedness Regions. The regions provide a structure for local communities to share and coordinate resources during an emergency. The regions are organized according to the National Response Framework, using an approach that groups response into Emergency Support Functions (ESFs). The ESFs provide the planning, support, resources, and services that are most likely needed during an emergency, including public health and medical.

The Connecticut Department of Public Health served as the lead agent at the state level for the PPHR application process.

For more information on Project Public Health Ready, including recognized sites, project tools, and resources, visithttp://www.naccho.org/PPHR.

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About Connecticut Association of Directors of Health

The Connecticut Association of Directors of Health is a 501(c)(3) organization that serves Connecticut's local governmental public health directors to strengthen and assure efficient and effective delivery of public health services.

For additional information about the Connecticut Association of Directors of Health, visit www.cadh.org or contact Charles Brown, Executive Director, at (860) 727-9874, ex. 104 or CharlesBrown@cadh.org.

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