

12-18

## STATEMENT OF POLICY

### Foundational Public Health Services

The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) recognizes the importance of an evidence- and experience-based minimum package of essential governmental public health services and capacities and believes that it is imperative that such costs are adequately covered. As such, NACCHO endorses the national foundational public health services (FPHS) model. This model consists of foundational capabilities and areas essential to all health departments and should be used by local health departments and their governing boards to plan and set priorities. It should also be used as a framework for accountability and performance measurement, and quality assurance and improvement. This basic package of capabilities and programs should be augmented by additional ones important to the department's community and given priority as a result of the community health needs assessment and health improvement plan.

The foundational public health services establish a threshold and a consistent basis for investments in governmental public health activity. NACCHO believes it is essential that the costs associated with adequately delivering the foundational public health services are also developed so that policymakers have a clear understanding of the financial, technological, and human resources necessary to assure the presence of these capabilities and programs for every community. The costs should be scaled to a jurisdiction's public health needs and based upon population size, among other parameters. Local health departments will require financial resources to provide these services. In addition, resources will be required for services provided through formal partnerships with neighboring local health departments and in arrangements with other community organizations or their state. Without those resources, local health departments cannot be expected to assure the delivery of the foundational capabilities.

NACCHO places a high priority on the development, definition, and funding of the foundational public health services.

#### **Justification**

Beginning in spring 2013, the Public Health Leadership Forum, funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) and facilitated by RESOLVE, convened to explore a recommendation from the Institute of Medicine report, *[For the Public's Health: Investing in a Healthier Future](#)*, to create a “minimum package of services.” This consists of a suite of skills, programs, and activities that must be available in state and local health departments everywhere for all places to have a functioning health system, and for which costs could be estimated.<sup>1</sup> The result was a conceptual framework describing both the foundation and programs that each health department should possess. Based on several years of work by “21st



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century states” and others in the field, the Public Health National Center for Innovations (PHNCI), which inherited the model with funding provided by RWJF, has updated materials that can be used to communicate the importance of building a strong public health infrastructure to support implementation of FPHS.<sup>2</sup>

Health departments provide public health protections in several areas, including preventing the spread of communicable disease, ensuring food, air, and water quality are safe, supporting maternal and child health, improving access to clinical care services, and preventing chronic disease and injury. In addition, public health departments provide local protections and services unique to their communities’ needs.

The infrastructure needed to provide these protections strives to provide fair opportunities for all to be healthy and includes the following foundational capabilities: 1) Assessment/Surveillance, 2) Emergency Preparedness and Response, 3) Policy Development and Support, 4) Communications, 5) Community Partnership Development, 6) Organizational Administrative Competencies and 7) Accountability/Performance Management. Health departments must be ready 24/7 to serve their communities. That requires access to a wide range of critical data sources, robust laboratory capacity, preparedness and policy planning capacity, and expert staff to leverage them in support of public health protections.

For more information on the foundational public health services model, see the Public Health National Center for Innovations’ website at <https://phnci.org/>.

## **References**

1. Institute of Medicine, Committee on Public Health Strategies to Improve Health (2012). *For the Public’s Health: Investing in a Healthier Future*. Washington, DC: National Academies Press. Retrieved on September 10, 2019, from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/24830052>.
2. Public Health National Center for Innovations (2018). Foundational Public Health Services. Alexandria, VA. Retrieved on September 10, 2019: <https://phnci.org/uploads/resource-files/FPHS-Factsheet-November-2018.pdf>

## **Record of Action**

*Proposed by NACCHO Public Health Transformation Workgroup*

*Adopted by NACCHO Executive Committee on behalf of the Board of Directors on December 19, 2012*

*Updated February 2016*

*Updated October 2019*