



National Association of County & City Health Officials

The National Connection for Local Public Health

For Immediate Release

Contact:

Theresa Spinner

Director of Media and Public Relations

Direct: 202.783.5551

tspinner@naccho.org

NACCHO Commends HELP Committee for Holding Hearing on the Importance of Vaccines

Witnesses include NACCHO Past-President, John Wiesman, DrPH, MPH

Washington, DC, March 5, 2019 — On behalf of the nation’s nearly 3,000 local health departments, today NACCHO [sent a letter](#) to the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee thanking them for holding a hearing on the importance of immunizations, entitled “Vaccines Save Lives: What Is Driving Preventable Disease Outbreaks?” John Wiesman, DrPH, MPH, Secretary of Health of the Washington State Department of Health, and former NACCHO Board President, testified at the hearing about the importance of the local-state-federal partnership to a strong immunization system.

Local health departments are key participants in our nation’s immunization infrastructure, with 90% of departments reporting that they participate in direct immunization efforts, as reported in [NACCHO’s 2018 Forces of Change Report](#). Beyond service delivery, local health departments also promote the importance of immunizations through education and policy, and they monitor, prevent, and control disease to reduce the health risks and financial burden of infectious disease cases and outbreaks.

There are real and perceived barriers to achieving optimal immunization rates to keep outbreaks at bay and our communities thriving. According to [NACCHO’s 2017 National Assessment of Local Health Department Immunization Programs](#), over half of local health department respondents report vaccine hesitancy as a barrier to their immunization

programs, with lack of vaccine education and confidence also noted as barriers. Similarly, access may be an issue for those who *do* want to vaccinate: A Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [study on vaccination coverage for children age 19 to 34 months](#) cited access and affordability as additional barriers to vaccinations.

For additional information on the role of Local Health Departments in addressing vaccine-preventable diseases, see:

NACCHO Policy Statements

- [Immunization Programs](#)
- [School and Child Care Immunization Requirements](#)
- [Vaccine Safety](#)
- [Vaccine Supply and Distribution](#)

NACCHO Essential Elements of Local Public Health Essays

- [Immunization Blog Posts](#)

NACCHO Podcast

- [Interview Dr. Melinda Wharton, Director of the Immunization Services Division at the National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

###

About NACCHO

The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) represents the nation's nearly 3,000 local health departments. These city, county, metropolitan, district, and tribal departments work every day to protect and promote health and well-being for all people in their communities. For more information about NACCHO, please visit www.naccho.org.