Committee Description

Environmental health is defined as "the discipline that focuses on health interrelationships between people and their environment, promotes human health and well-being, and fosters a safe and healthful environment."1

NACCHO’s well-established environmental health program engages partners from the local to the federal level. With support from the Environmental Health Services Branch of the National Center for Environmental Health at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, NACCHO’s Environmental Health Committee has included members from local health departments across the United States and Canada.

The committee, with the Climate Change, Environmental Public Health Tracking, and Food Safety Workgroups, addresses the following strategic objectives:

- Develop, engage, and sustain relationships and partnerships;
- Update and develop new policy statements related to environmental health;
- Provide leadership in recommending input on legislation and policies impacting local environmental public health;
- Review and provide additional feedback in concert with the environmental health workgroups on legislation and policies, such as transportation, food safety, and climate change;
- Ensure that environmental health is well represented across NACCHO activities (e.g., model practices, NACCHO Annual Conference sessions, NACCHO Exchange articles).

Committee Goals

- Grow and elevate NACCHO’s environmental health program.
- Focus on continuous quality improvement.
- Provide effective strategies and tools to address existing and emerging environmental health issues.

Impact of Budget Cuts on Environmental Health Services at LHDs

- Of the 75% of LHDs that could separate environmental health revenue from overall revenue, about one-fifth saw an increase from the previous fiscal year, while more than one-third saw a decrease in revenue.
- 3 out of 10 LHDs experienced a reduction of environmental health staff for budget reasons.
- 33.7% of LHDs cut at least one environmental health service for budgetary reasons.
- Services most negatively impacted by budget constraints included food safety, vector control, and drinking water.
- Percent per Region of Staff Losses n LHDs
  - South – 52.1%
  - Northeast – 34.9%
  - West – 31.8%
  - Midwest – 26.5%
Committee Membership

Members:
- Douglas McVey, Buncombe County (NC) Health Department
- Felix Zemel, Cohasset Board of Health (MA)
- Geoff Snyder, Madison County (NY) Health Department
- Julianne Price, Chair, Indian River County (FL) Health Department
- Mary Helen Smith, Portage County (OH) Health District
- Melody Bowyer, South Central Public Health District (ID)
- Michael Schaffer, Harris County (TX) Public Health and Environmental Sciences
- Robert Glandon, Michigan State University
- Sheila Pressley, Madison County (KY) Health Department
- Thomas Dunlop, Pitkin County (CO) Environmental Public Health Advocate
- Tom Butts, Tri-County (CO) Health Department
- Tyler Zerwekh, Shelby County (TN) Health Department

References
1. http://www.naccho.org/topics/environmental/

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