



National Association of County & City Health Officials

The National Connection for Local Public Health

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CDC's New Antibiotic Resistance Threats Report Shows Persistent Problem

*— Antibiotic resistance continues to grow as a public health threat;
local health department efforts critical to addressing issue —*

Washington, DC, November 13, 2019 — Today, the [National Association of County and City Health Officials](#) (NACCHO), representing the nation's nearly 3,000 local governmental health departments, released the following statement in response to the newly released [Antibiotic Resistance Threats Report, 2019](#) from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The report reveals the threat of antibiotic resistance is bigger than previously projected and continues to grow, resulting in at least 2.8 million infections, more than 35,000 deaths, and billions in healthcare costs each year. Nonetheless, findings also indicate that prevention efforts have worked to reduce death from resistant pathogens by nearly 20 percent overall.

“On average, someone in the United States dies from an antibiotic-resistant infection every 15 minutes. The updated threat report shows that the problem of antibiotic resistance is not going away. The number of cases across the U.S. continues to grow, having a very real impact on the individuals and communities affected,” said Lori Tremmel Freeman, MBA, NACCHO Chief Executive Officer. “Despite this, thanks to additional investments and focus, prevention efforts by public health and healthcare partners are making a difference in curbing this threat. As new resistance continues to emerge, local

health departments are uniquely positioned to work with healthcare and community partners in infection control and containment response. But funding and resources, including additional personnel, are required, as local health departments have lost almost a quarter of their workforce in the last decade. Increased resources are crucial to continuing the gains made to date and responding to the ongoing threat posed by expanding, evolving, and emerging resistant bacteria and fungi.”

Thanks to the availability of more robust and reliable data sources, the [new report](#) establishes a new national baseline of antibiotic resistance and estimates that antibiotic-resistant bacteria and fungi are responsible for at least 2,868,700 infections and 35,900 deaths each year, not including disease attributed to *clostridioides difficile* (*C. diff*), which causes an additional 223,900 cases and 12,800 deaths. The report also provides an updated Threats List that categorizes current antibiotic-resistant bacteria and pathogens as urgent, serious, or concerning, and includes a watch list of emerging pathogens.

The list of urgent threats has grown and now includes carbapenem-resistant *Acinetobacter* and *Candida auris*, an emerging fungal infection that was not reported in the United States until 2016. Drug-resistant *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* (gonorrhea) remains an urgent threat and another sexually transmitted infection, [Mycoplasma genitalium](#), has been added to CDC’s Watch List. Gonorrhea has developed resistance to a series of antibiotics, leaving only one effective treatment option — a concerning trend as gonorrhea cases have [increased 83%](#) since 2009.

While the report data paint a troubling picture, the number of deaths from antibiotic resistance overall is 18 percent less than 2013 estimates, and the percent decrease jumps to 28 percent in hospital settings, where many efforts have been concentrated. Such dramatic results in the hospital setting point to the importance of investment as a facilitator of success and to a need for expanded efforts in community settings.

The report also provides crucial information about the vital role of state and local health departments in combatting antibiotic resistance in healthcare and community settings. They collect and analyze data to identify outbreaks, establish trends, target prevention, and investigate reportable diseases and unusual resistance. They also implement containment strategies to stop the spread of new or targeted resistance. Often serving as conveners and connectors working with healthcare providers, local partners,

and other health departments, local health departments lead coordination efforts, share best practices, provide education, and support the implementation of antibiotic stewardship principles in diverse settings.

NACCHO has worked closely with the CDC to support local health departments in prevention and response to antibiotic resistance, including support and capacity-building assistance for jurisdictions implementing containment strategies. In 2018, the association [joined the AMR Challenge](#) to increase the awareness and capacity of LHDs across the country to fight antimicrobial resistance. NACCHO also develops and promotes tools, trainings, resources, and lessons learned from local health departments engaged in antibiotic resistance prevention and response and antibiotic stewardship.

To learn more about how NACCHO and local health departments are addressing this public health threat, check out the following resources:

- Fact Sheet: [Antimicrobial Resistance: Local Efforts on a Global Issue](#)
- Fact Sheet: [Antimicrobial Stewardship](#)
- Webinar: [Clinical and Public Health Partnerships for Antibiotic Stewardship](#)
- Q&A: [Containing an MDRO: Tools Developed During a Response](#)

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About NACCHO

The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) represents the nation's nearly 3,000 local governmental 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.