



National Association of County & City Health Officials

*The National Connection for Local Public Health*

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **NACCHO Supports a Number of White House Public Health Approaches to Stem the Opioid Crisis**

**Washington, DC, March 19, 2018** — The [National Association of County and City Health Officials](#) (NACCHO), representing nearly 3,000 local health departments, commends the inclusion of public health approaches as part of the White House’s Initiative to Stop Opioid Abuse. The initiative includes support of expanding access to evidence-based treatment, including Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT), as well as removing barriers to Medicaid reimbursement for treatment. The plan also seeks to increase the availability of opioid overdose reversing drugs, including Naloxone, to first responders.

NACCHO supports a multi-pronged approach to assist local health departments in combating the crisis: 1) Strengthening the understanding of the epidemic through better public health surveillance; 2) Increasing prevention efforts; 3) Promoting the use of overdose-reversing drugs; 4) Investing in healthcare information technology to connect prescription drug monitoring programs (PDMP) with electronic health records; 5) Expanding cross-sector partnerships; 6) Improving access to treatment, including MAT; and 7) Advancing better practices for pain management.

“NACCHO supports a public health approach as the most effective way to address the opioid epidemic afflicting so many of our communities. An infusion of resources at the local level is essential to mounting a full-fledged response,” said Laura Hanen, MPP,

NACCHO Interim Executive Director and Chief of Government Affairs. “The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention must have adequate funding to ensure local health departments are equipped to contain outbreaks and monitor data, while still serving other aspects of their community’s health. In addition, there must be a focus on the rise in blood-borne infections associated with injection drug use.

“Every day, 115 Americans die of opioid and drug overdoses, according to the most recent statistics from the CDC,” Hanen continued. “Local health departments are the boots on the ground that, if given the resources, can bring partners together across the spectrum to find solutions to this multi-faceted and complex crisis. Robust and sustained funding is critical to their mandate to protect the public’s health.”

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#### **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](http://www.naccho.org).