



National Association of County & City Health Officials

*The National Connection for Local Public Health*

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Continued Federal Funding to Prevent the Spread of Zika More Urgent than Ever with Reports of the First Locally-Acquired Case This Year**

**Washington, DC, July 27, 2017**—With the announcement of the nation’s first case of locally-acquired Zika for the 2017 season reported today, the [National Association of County and City Health Officials](#) (NACCHO) representing the nation’s nearly 3,000 local governmental health departments, is calling on Congress to allocate funds to keep our communities safe from this debilitating disease. The impact of the Zika virus on pregnant women and their babies can have devastating effects on families. It will cost millions of dollars to care for a child with Zika-related birth defects over their lifespan.

“I can’t overstate the need of continued funding and support resources for local health departments so they can help protect their communities from mosquito-borne diseases such as Zika. From mosquito control programs, mosquito bite prevention education, to disease surveillance, health departments have a responsibility to protect the health and well-being of their communities. With the first locally-acquired case for 2017, and with summer well underway, we have to be vigilant to prevent new Zika cases from occurring,” said NACCHO’s President Umair A. Shah, MD.

A resident of Hidalgo County, TX has tested positive for the Zika virus, the state's first probable Zika infection this year. Zika is still here and remains a threat in the U.S. State and local health departments in partnership and support with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) need continued funding in order to combat the disease. Together this collective public health response can limit the impact of Zika in our at-risk communities. This funding is vital to our efforts to increase the readiness and response capacity of laboratory, epidemiology, environmental, and maternal and child health programs.

One-time supplemental funding that Congress provided to address Zika is running out. Further, the CDC receives 12 percent of its annual funding from the Prevention and Public Health Fund (PPHF) and passes much of the money on to state and local health departments in the form of grants. Senators debating the repeal of the Affordable Care Act are also considering whether to repeal or cut the PPHF. With regard to Zika, epidemiology and lab capacity grants funded in part by the PPHF are critical to identifying women who have been infected and tracking the spread of the virus.

"If Congress eliminates the PPHF and fails to continue to allocate vital funding enabling local health departments to carry out their mandate to protect our communities, they will have failed to protect the American public they have been elected to serve," said Laura Hanen, NACCHO's Interim Executive Director and Chief of Government Affairs.

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