



Local Health Departments Prevent Opioid Abuse and Overdose

Local health departments are on the front lines of the prescription drug and heroin abuse epidemic, as well as the rise in substance use disorders. They work to increase community access to prescription drug abuse treatment and prevention and for accessibility to medications that reverse overdoses and save lives.

A comprehensive federal response is still needed. Overdoses caused by opioids, both prescription drugs and heroin, take more than 115 lives a day. Death rates from opioid overdose have never been higher. In the United States, one in 10 people misusing prescription drugs will switch to heroin, and over 591,000 Americans reported using heroin in 2016.

Opioid Policy Priorities

To address the opioid epidemic, Congress must ensure sustained appropriations for increased opioid surveillance and prevention measures at state and local health departments. NACCHO also recommends that Congress address the following:

- Increase federal investment in local health department capacity by ensuring that any authorizing or appropriation legislation specifies both state and local health departments as eligible recipients for opioid grant dollars.
- Encourage local health departments to implement syringe service programs to reduce harm from injection drug use and opioid use disorder, including the spread of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and viral hepatitis by lifting the federal ban on syringe purchase.
- Set limits on prescribing or dispensing controlled substances, with allowances for specialty clinics and pharmacies with documented expertise in the management of substance dependency and chronic pain.
- Protect first responders and good Samaritans from liability associated with naloxone administration during a suspected drug overdose.

NACCHO Recommendations

To protect health and safety, NACCHO recommends the following in fiscal year (FY) 2020:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

OPIOID PRESCRIPTION AND DRUG OVERDOSE PREVENTION

FY19: \$476 million

FY20 President's Budget: \$476 million

FY20 NACCHO Request: \$650 million

In FY2019, CDC will fund all 50 states for Prescription Drug Overdose Prevention to provide state health departments with resources and support to advance interventions for prevention prescription drug

overdoses. For the first time, Congress included language in FY2019 directing CDC to ensure that local health departments are also eligible for funding, along with states.

ELIMINATING OPIOID-RELATED INFECTIOUS DISEASES ACT OF 2018

FY19: N/A

FY20 President's Budget: \$58 million

FY20 NACCHO Request: \$58 million

In 2018 Congress authorized CDC to spearhead an initiative aimed at curbing the rise in incidences of HIV, Hepatitis A, B and C and other infectious diseases related to intravenous drug use.

NACCHO also supports the following programs which help to address the opioid epidemic:

- Health Resources and Services Administration: Rural Communities Opioid Response Program
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services

Administration (SAMHSA):

- Medication-Assisted Treatment for Prescription Drug and Opioid Addiction and
- State Targeted Response to the Opioid Crisis Grants
- U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Development Grants

Local Health Departments Protect the Community

Local health departments work to reduce the toll of opioid abuse and overdose through the following:

- **Surveillance** - Monitoring both local and state data to analyze opioid and heroin use, overdose, drug use-related infections, and mortality trends.
- **Education** - Educating healthcare providers on proper opioid prescribing practices and encouraging use of prescription drug monitoring programs.
- **Training** - Teaching first responders and community members to use lifesaving overdose reversal medications, such as naloxone; and helping local health care providers adopt CDC best practices on opioid prescribing.
- **Treatment and Recovery** - Promoting substance abuse treatment programs including those that use medication-assisted treatment.
- **Cross-Cutting Partnerships** - Creating local task forces to develop and implement "take back" programs that allow for safe disposal of unused prescription drugs.

NACCHO LOOPR Sites

With financial support from the CDC, NACCHO's Local Opioid Overdose Prevention and Response (LOOPR) project increases the capacity of local health departments to respond effectively to the opioid epidemic by working more closely with state and local partners (e.g., law enforcement, healthcare providers, local/state health departments) and implementing evidence-based strategies at the local level.

NACCHO will provide support and technical assistance to local health departments for exploring, planning, and implementing innovative and collaborative approaches to support efforts to combat the opioid crisis within their communities. LOOPR sites are tasked with creating a Community Action Plan that identifies their unique strategies to reduce fatal and non-fatal opioid overdoses, and build local capacity to enhance prevention, harm reduction, and linkages to care.

About NACCHO

The National Association of County and City Health Officials is the voice of nearly 3,000 local health departments across the country. These city, county, metropolitan, district, and tribal departments work every day to ensure the safety of the water we drink, the food we eat, and the air we breathe.

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The mission of the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) is to improve the health of communities by strengthening and advocating for local health departments.

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