

NACCHO

National Association of County & City Health Officials

The National Connection for Local Public Health

March 20, 2018

The Honorable Ann McLane Kuster
137 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Kuster:

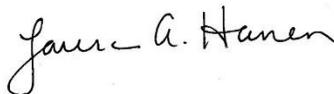
On behalf of the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) and nearly 3,000 local health departments, I am writing today in support of your legislation to address overdoses and death associated with the opioid epidemic. NACCHO represents city, county, metropolitan, district, and tribal health departments that work every day to help ensure prevention and treatment options and resources are available to those affected by the opioid epidemic.

Local health departments are key partners in protecting the health and well-being of their community and are instrumental in slowing the opioid epidemic. A comprehensive response to the opioid epidemic, which resulted in over 64,000 overdose deaths in 2016, must include wide-ranging infectious disease prevention efforts, strategies to reduce fatal overdose, increased substance use treatment, and reductions in the infectious disease consequences of the opioid epidemic, particularly rising cases of Hepatitis B and C, and HIV.

Your bill recognizes the threat of fentanyl which is highly dangerous to injection drug users. The legislation would assist public health laboratories in their efforts to detect fentanyl and other synthetic opioids. Fentanyl testing may prevent overdose deaths in heroin users that are unaware a supply is laced with fentanyl. NACCHO recommends in addition to the agencies named in the bill, CDC should be included in these efforts. The pilot program authorized in this bill which would allow point-of-use testing that could save lives. Staying ahead of the supply chain will allow for early detection and prevent large overdose outbreaks.

NACCHO looks forward to continuing to work with Congress to realize its goals of controlling the opioid epidemic. Thank you for your attention to the devastating impact of infectious disease on people who inject drugs. Please contact Ian Goldstein, NACCHO Government Affairs Specialist for further information at 202-507-4273 or igoldstein@naccho.org.

Sincerely,



Laura A. Hanen, MPP
Interim Executive Director & Chief of Government Affairs

