

NACCHO

National Association of County & City Health Officials

The National Connection for Local Public Health

March 9, 2020

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chair
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education,
Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS,
Education, Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair DeLauro and Representative Cole:

Thank you for holding the hearing “Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Budget Request for FY 2021.” 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.

Federal funding is critical to local health departments' capacity to protect the public. The provision of robust funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is particularly important. Through CDC, the federal government provides critical funding and technical assistance for local, state, and national programs to strengthen public health capacity, share timely and critical information, and improve health to save untold lives annually. In recent years the CDC's funding has remained static and has not kept pace with inflation. That is why NACCHO is part of a coalition of nearly 100 organizations requesting a 22% increase in CDC funding by 2022. Thank you for your support in FY2020 in moving toward this goal. With an increased federal investment in CDC funding, the agency will be better able to implement effective programs to address local, state, and federal public health priorities.

Thank you also for your efforts to support funding to strengthen local, state, federal, territorial, tribal, and global capacity and coordination to adequately respond to the COVID-19 crisis. Across the country, local health departments have been and continue to be on the front lines of the COVID-19 response. They are responsible for assessing people for the risk of contracting the disease; finding and testing persons of interest who of have recently traveled to affected areas or who are exhibiting symptoms; monitoring anyone who has been in close contact with people under investigation; and arranging for isolation and quarantine when necessary. We look forward to working with you to ensure that these funds are released from the federal government in a timely manner and that sufficient funding amounts reach local health departments without delay.

While emergency supplemental funding will support critical activities to rapidly respond to the COVID-19 outbreak, it does not preclude the need for Congress to provide sustained, continued, and increased investments through the annual appropriations process for HHS to expand capacity to address other existing and future public health threats. In far too many localities, response to COVID-19 means diverting staff and limited resources from other projects — strategies that are not sustainable and which run the risk of compromising other critical work. That is why NACCHO supports efforts to bolster the public workforce – which has been cut by nearly a quarter since 2008 and faces challenges in recruiting



and retaining individuals with critical skills. NACCHO advocates for the establishment of a new loan repayment program for local, state, territorial and tribal public health professionals— modelled after the successful National Health Service Corps— to help recruit and retain trained staff.

Thank you again for your focus on CDC as the primary public health agency in the federal government. Please contact Adriane Casalotti, NACCHO's Chief of Government and Public Affairs, at acasalotti@naccho.org for any additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lori Tremmel Freeman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Lori Tremmel Freeman, MBA
CEO