

NACCHO

National Association of County & City Health Officials

The National Connection for Local Public Health

March 14, 2018

The Honorable Leonard Lance
2352 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Lance:

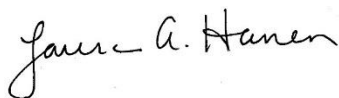
On behalf of the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) and nearly 3,000 local health departments, I am writing today in support of the Eliminating Opioid Related Infectious Diseases Act of 2018. NACCHO represents city, county, metropolitan, district, and tribal health departments 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. In addition to concerns about opioid overdose, there are additional risks for poor health outcomes and blood-borne infections, including HIV, hepatitis C virus (HCV), and hepatitis B virus (HBV) among injection drug users. Substantial progress has been made in reducing HIV infections among injection drug users, but increases in injection drug use stemming from the opioid epidemic present a new set of challenges, particularly in rural and suburban communities. These areas often lack the public health and healthcare infrastructure and services to comprehensively address the epidemic, leaving communities vulnerable to infectious disease outbreaks.

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 HBV, HCV, and HIV. Your bill would help to decrease the toll of infectious disease by encouraging robust surveillance of infections associated with injection drug use. It would also support health professionals on the front lines of infectious disease outbreaks by providing education and training in the detection and control of infections.

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

