

NACCHO

National Association of County & City Health Officials

The National Connection for Local Public Health

July 18, 2018

Chairman Greg Walden
House Energy & Commerce Committee
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member Frank Pallone
House Energy & Commerce Committee
2322A Rayburn House Office Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Congresswoman Susan Brooks
1030 Longworth House Office Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Congresswoman Anna Eshoo
241 Cannon House Office Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Walden, Ranking Member Pallone, and Representatives Brooks and Eshoo:

On behalf of the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO), I am writing in support of the “Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness Advancing Innovation Act (PAHPAIA) of 2018” (H.R. 6378). NACCHO is the voice of the nearly 3,000 local health departments across the country that prepare communities for disasters, respond if emergencies occur, and lend support throughout the recovery process. PAHPAIA will provide needed stability for the nation’s emergency preparedness and response enterprise. We thank you for your leadership on this legislation that is essential to protecting our nation and look forward to working with you to strengthen the legislation as it moves forward.

Among the many provisions in the bill, NACCHO highlights the following:

PHEP, HPP, MRC

The programs reauthorized in PAHPAIA are vital to local health departments. The Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) program and Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP), reauthorized in PAHPAIA, are complementary programs with different purposes. PHEP supports local health departments’ response to public health threats and helps to build resilient communities. HPP enables health care systems to save lives during emergencies that exceed day-to-day capacity of health and emergency response systems. In addition, the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) program provides additional public health personnel to respond to emergency needs as well as everyday health threats.

The PHEP, HPP and MRC programs deserve a level of funding that is consistent with the threats that are experienced on the ground level in cities and counties across the nation. In 2017, Congress spent a record breaking \$80 billion to provide relief from Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria, and devastating wildfires in California. Without the support of PHEP, HPP and MRC, the cost could have been much higher. A comprehensive, cost saving and proactive public health approach to disaster preparedness helps communities to effectively mitigate the damage and costs of disasters and help recover in the aftermath. Sustained funding to support local preparedness and response capacity helps local health departments build and convene diverse partners such as police, fire, transportation, planning



departments, and community based organizations and develop and implement evidence-based, community-centered strategies.

Medical Countermeasures

NACCHO supports the codification of the Public Health Emergency Medical Countermeasures Enterprise (PHEMCE). The PHEMCE Strategy and Implementation should require that state and local health departments be involved in all phases of the medical countermeasures (MCM) enterprise including in initial investment; research and development of vaccines, medicines, diagnostics and equipment for responding to emerging public health threats; and distribution and dispensing of countermeasures. NACCHO urges that state and local public health departments have a permanent place in the PHEMCE membership to ensure that all decisions that will affect state and local health functions are vetted by public health authorities.

Current funding, support, and expertise provided to state and local health departments for the Strategic National Stockpile must be maintained regardless of the infrastructure or location of the SNS – it is too vital to this country's ability to respond in the midst of a variety of large-scale emergencies.

Public Health Emergency Fund

NACCHO appreciates that the bill strengthens existing authorities for the Public Health Emergency Fund (PHEF). A standing rapid response fund to provide bridge funding between base preparedness funding and supplemental appropriations for acute emergencies and emerging threats is absolutely necessary.

NACCHO also appreciates the inclusion of provisions to maintain the pipeline of workers in the Epidemic Intelligence Service and to improve preparedness for children, seniors and people with disabilities. NACCHO appreciates the Committee's acknowledgement that pandemic influenza, antimicrobial resistance and other emerging infectious diseases are under the umbrella of the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority's (BARDA) mission. Recent years have demonstrated that infectious diseases represent as significant a threat to our national security as a natural disaster or terror attack.

Thank you for your work to strengthen and enhance our nation's preparedness and response system. We look forward to continuing to work with you as this legislation moves forward. Please contact Laura Hanen, Chief of Government Affairs at 202.507.4255 or lhane@naccho.org should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lori Tremmel Freeman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Lori Tremmel Freeman, MBA
Chief Executive Officer