

NACCHO STATEMENT ON NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (2019-nCoV)

Washington, DC, January 28, 2020 — The National Association of County and City Health Officials, on behalf of the nation’s nearly 3,000 local governmental health departments, issued the following statement in light to the ongoing novel coronavirus outbreak in Wuhan, China. As of press time, there have been five confirmed cases in the U.S., with more than 100 people being monitored for possible infection.

“As our global public health system tracks and responds to the 2019 Novel Coronavirus outbreak, local health departments are working with their federal and state counterparts, along with health care partners, to ensure that our communities are doing all they can to prevent domestic transmission and prepare for possible cases in their communities,” said E. Oscar Alleyne, DrPH, MPH, NACCHO’s Chief of Programs and Services.

“Local health departments are working with partners in their communities to protect the public’s health: they are communicating with transportation officials on airport screenings, educating healthcare providers about what to look for, facilitating quick diagnosis of potential cases, and reaching out to the public about general best practices to reduce the spread of infectious diseases.

“While the work of local health departments often occurs in the background, events like this highlight the importance of a strong public health infrastructure and the critical role that the public health workforce plays in keeping our communities healthy and safe.

“The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention continue to deem the current risk to the general public as low, local health departments and NACCHO will continue to engage with relevant partners to ensure that all communities have the information and resources they need.”

How You Can Protect Yourself and Others

While the immediate risk of coronavirus to the American public may be low at this time, it is still highly important to remain vigilant against the spread of infectious diseases. It is peak flu season and the CDC estimates that from October through mid-January, there have been upwards of 21 million cases of flu illnesses and anywhere between 8,200–20,000 deaths resulting from the flu. The CDC recommends preventive measures to help mitigate the spread of respiratory illnesses, including:

- Wash hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Stay home when you feel sick
- Get the flu vaccine
- Avoid touching body orifices like eyes, mouth, and nose with unwashed hands
- Properly cover your sneeze and cough, and dispose used tissue in the appropriate trash receptacles
- Frequently disinfect objects and surfaces; and
- Avoid close contact with those who are sick.

About NACCHO

The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) represents the nation's nearly 3,000 local 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. For more information about NACCHO, please visit www.naccho.org.