



National Association of County & City Health Officials

The National Connection for Local Public Health

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Local Health Departments Standing Strong on the Frontlines of COVID-19 Response

A Statement by NACCHO CEO Lori Tremmel Freeman in Honor of National Public Health Week.

Washington, DC, April 9, 2020 – “Each year, National Public Health Week (NPHW) serves to recognize the contributions of the public health field to improving our nation's health. As the voice of the nation’s nearly 3,000 local health departments (LHDs), the [National Association of County and City Health Officials](#) (NACCHO) is especially proud to honor the work of its members as they lead on the frontlines of the COVID-19 response as they do everything possible and put their own safety at risk to protect the health of their communities.

“The work of health departments is often done under the radar. COVID-19 changed that. Recognition of our county and city health departments and the public health professionals who serve in those departments across the country is more important than ever. Our members are playing a critical role in testing, tracing, and tracking the spread of the virus; providing up-to-date health information and education to communities; collaborating with mental and behavioral health organizations to reduce anxiety and promote well-being in these uncertain times; and offering resources to help battle stigma and discrimination. These are unprecedented times for public health, and local health department efforts to monitor and mitigate community transmission of COVID-19 are making an incredible impact.

“While the pandemic rages on across the globe, local health department staff are leading the way to respond to the virus in the counties, cities, and towns that make up our nation. They have done so for months, with no end in sight, and they do it despite incredible challenges. I am so grateful that they do.

“As the U.S. continues responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, local health departments’ roles will be expanding in ways that rapidly unfold as their work, expertise, and actions are needed more than ever. Here at NACCHO, we are immensely proud of the dedication and sacrifice of our members and deeply committed to supporting them through this unprecedented event. The road ahead will be long, but we’re proud to walk it hand-in-hand with our nation’s local health departments.”

To recognize the breadth and depth of local health department response to COVID-19, NACCHO [published a blog](#) featuring stories from across the United States. Below is a quick overview of some of the local efforts highlighted in the blog:

- **Testing, Tracing, and Tracking to Prevent the Spread.** From administering tests to engaging in contact tracing to conducting surveillance, LHDs are working hard to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Some activities include setting up ‘mobile strike teams’ to provide testing to uninsured and high-risk populations; establishing drive-thru testing sites, as well as temporary health centers that allow for isolation of suspected or confirmed cases; and developing heat maps to inform people about where confirmed cases are in the community.
- **Supporting Mental Health and Well-Being.** Despite experiencing their own fears, anxieties and emotional fatigue, public health professionals at LHDs are supporting mental wellness a variety of ways. Some activities include setting up hotlines, coordinating with local media to distribute mental health resources and self-care tips, and hosting virtual town halls for community members.
- **Educating and Advising the Community.** LHDs have been engaged in efforts to ensure that health communication and outreach meets the needs of all people within their communities, particularly hard-to-reach and vulnerable populations. Some activities include translating COVID-19 information and hosting live conference calls in multiple languages to ensure diverse language communities stay updated, as well as using multidisciplinary outreach teams to engage unhoused populations.

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About NACCHO

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. For more information about NACCHO, please visit www.naccho.org