



National Association of County & City Health Officials

*The National Connection for Local Public Health*

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Contact:**

Theresa Spinner  
Director, Media and Public Relations  
Direct: 202-783-5551  
[tspinner@naccho.org](mailto:tspinner@naccho.org)

## **Local Health Departments Call on Administration, Congress to Provide Supplemental Funding to Address Coronavirus (COVID-19) Outbreak**

*— Millions in uncovered costs already incurred as health departments prepare for and respond to potential and confirmed cases —*

**Washington, DC, February 24, 2020** — The [National Association of County and City Health Officials](#) (NACCHO), on behalf of the nation's 3,000 local health departments, released the following statement urging the Administration to request and for Congress to pass emergency supplemental funding to sufficiently support the work of local health departments to prepare for and respond to the coronavirus.

Our nation has taken strong steps to help address the spread of coronavirus around the world and slow its spread here in the U.S. As we have done so, local health departments have been the front lines of these activities.

Across the country, local health departments have been and continue to be responsible for assessing people for the risk of contracting the disease; finding and testing persons of interest who of have recently traveled to China 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. They are working with health care providers to help ensure medical professionals know what to look for—and how to report—suspected cases. On top of all of this, they are working with their community partners to disseminate credible information, calm fears, and dispel myths.

Despite the relatively low number of confirmed cases in the U.S. to date, local health professionals are already working above and beyond the call of duty. In far too many localities, that means diverting staff and limited resources from other projects — strategies that are not sustainable and which run the risk of compromising other critical work. This is particularly challenging as local health departments have lost nearly a quarter of their workforce in the past decade due to budget cuts.

Among other things, local health departments need new, dedicated resources to support vital isolation/quarantine related activities, including transportation and lodging and wrap around services like behavioral health support or even necessities like food and toiletries. They need the support to locate and monitor the health status of patients that are currently under investigation, provide trusted outreach to the general public (including translation of public health materials) and healthcare facilities, and they need personal protective equipment.

To date, local health departments have not received any reimbursements for the work they have done to address the coronavirus, but the bill keeps getting longer. Emergency supplemental funding—both for the federal response, but also directed to local and state activities—is absolutely critical to support current response activities as well as future work to combat this powerful virus.

On Monday, NACCHO joined other public health organizations, including the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO), Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE), and the Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL) to formally request action on and inform the formation of an emergency supplemental request that would help expand and strengthen local, state, federal, and global capacity and coordination to adequately respond to this infectious disease outbreak. Read the letter [here](#) and the funding request [here](#).

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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](http://www.naccho.org).

