



National Association of County & City Health Officials

*The National Connection for Local Public Health*

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **NACCHO and ASTHO to Host Joint Public Health Advocacy Day to Highlight Chronic Underfunding of the Governmental Public Health System**

*— Funding Critical to Support Public Health Safety Measures Including COVID-19 Response in the U.S. —*

**Washington, DC, February 25, 2020** — On February 26, the [National Association of County and City Health Officials](#) (NACCHO) and the [Association of State and Territorial Health Officials](#) (ASTHO), along with members of the Big Cities Health Coalition (BCHC), numerous State Associations of County and City Health Officials (SACCHOs), and the National Association of Local Boards of Health (NALBOH), will team up as one public health voice on Capitol Hill. Together, they will educate policymakers about the need for increased federal funding for public health departments. This includes both support for key public health programs, but also for the broader governmental public health infrastructure—especially its workforce.

“Our nation’s public health system is, at its core, a partnership between federal, state, and local governments. But we need the funding and the workforce to ensure this partnership is strong,” said NACCHO Board of Directors President George T. Roberts, Jr. “That is what Public Health on the Hill day is all about—leveraging our collective efforts to highlight the value of our nation’s governmental public health system and urge strong, sustained support.”

“It is critical that policymakers hear directly from health officials about their work and the investments needed to ensure that health departments can be ready to face any challenge,” says Nathaniel Smith, MD, MPH, secretary of health at the Arkansas Department of Health and president of ASTHO. “There are many public health threats facing the nation right now. We need to ensure we’re equipped and ready to address our daily public health programs and other high-profile issues like the COVID-19 outbreak.”

Participants will conduct nearly 200 meetings with key members of Congress and their staff to discuss shared priorities, including the need to increase funding for the entire public health system through the annual appropriations bill and the importance of supporting a new initiative to assist in recruiting and retaining top talent to health departments to ensure a strong workforce now and in the future. Additional investments will help ensure that the public health system is ready and able when any challenge arises. Participants will also provide first-hand information about how their communities are addressing the coronavirus and what they need to support a sustained response, without reducing other services. These types of emergencies strain the entire public health system, and when funding is pulled from one area to address another disease it does not help achieve the goal of protecting and promoting the health of all Americans.

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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).

#### **About ASTHO**

ASTHO is the national nonprofit organization representing the public health agencies of the United States, the U.S. territories and freely associated states, and the District of Columbia, as well as the more than 100,000 public health professionals these agencies employ. ASTHO members, the chief health officials of these jurisdictions, are dedicated to formulating and influencing sound public health policy and to ensuring excellence in public health practice. For more information, please visit [www.astho.org](http://www.astho.org).