

NACCHO's 2020 Federal Legislative and Policy Agenda



NACCHO's mission is to improve the health of communities by strengthening and advocating for local health departments. The Federal Legislative and Policy Agenda guides NACCHO's work in its interactions with federal agencies and Congress. The Agenda features NACCHO's priority issues and is informed by local health department input and approved annually by the Board of Directors.

NACCHO recognizes that policy decisions both within and outside the traditional health sphere impact health status. NACCHO seeks opportunities to promote collaboration between and integration of public health and health care providers, as well as across the social determinants of health, to better address population health and wellbeing. NACCHO also supports approaches that contribute to the elimination of health inequities. NACCHO advocates a health in all policies approach to help explicitly address decisions made outside the health sector that significantly impact public health.

In 2020, NACCHO will lead a focused effort to strengthen the public health workforce, push for strong investments in federal public health programs, and work in coalition to address the many public health policy issues that local health departments work on every day.

Public Health Workforce

The public health workforce is the backbone of our nation's governmental public health system. However, governmental public health was hit hard by the Great Recession and whereas much of the rest of the public sector workforce has recovered, or grown, local health departments have not. In fact, local health departments have lost 23% of their workforce since 2008, shedding over 40,000 jobs across the country. This deficiency is compounded by the age of the public health workforce—55% of local public health professionals are over age 45, and almost a quarter of health department staff are eligible for retirement.

Between those who plan to retire or pursue jobs in the private sector, projections suggest that over a third of the local workforce might leave in coming years. At the same time, there is an opportunity for public health departments to harness new technologies to move the field forward, but they need staff with diverse skillsets to help lead this work. Combined, these forces indicate a public health workforce crisis that must be addressed now.

Therefore, NACCHO will lead a campaign to call on Congress to invest in the public health workforce, by enacting and implementing a loan repayment program for public health professionals who agree to serve two years in a local, state, or tribal health department. Such a program would help to provide health departments with appropriate staff who can tackle 21st century challenges and increase health departments' capacity to keep the public healthy and safe.



Public Health Funding

Federal public health funding is critical to the work of local health departments, and NACCHO will continue its efforts to ensure strong federal investments in public health programs.

- **22x22 Campaign for CDC:** NACCHO will continue to be an active participant in the 22x22 campaign to raise the budget of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) 22% by 2022. A \$1.5 billion total funding increase by 2022 would allow CDC to better implement effective programs to address federal, state, and local public health priorities.
- **Other appropriations:** NACCHO will continue to advocate for strong appropriations in FY2020 and FY2021 for public health programs within the CDC, Food and Drug Administration, Health Resources and Services Administration, and Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response. To ensure adequate funding, NACCHO supports continuation at authorized levels for the Prevention and Public Health Fund.
- **Ensure funding reaches communities:** It is important that the continuum of governmental public health work together to support our shared mission. To do that, NACCHO will continue to advocate for public health funding to flow from the federal level to states and local communities, where appropriate, to most effectively improve the public's health. NACCHO also urges the federal government to ensure greater local health department consensus in state public health enterprise decision-making concerning the distribution and uses of federal funds, similar to the requirement in the Public Health Emergency Preparedness Cooperative Agreement.

Policy Work in Coalitions

NACCHO will continue to be a strong partner in coalitions that work on the following issues (listed in alphabetical order):

- **Access to healthcare,** including Affordable Care Act (ACA) defense, maintenance of core public health programs authorized and funded by the ACA, and clinical and community preventive services supported by the ACA.
- **Behavioral and mental health care services.**
- **Chronic disease prevention,** including active living, nutrition, and food security.
- **Data modernization and infrastructure,** including interoperable data exchange between public health and health care providers.
- **Emergency preparedness,** including implementation of the Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness and Advancing Innovation Act and establishment of a robust Public Health Emergency Fund.
- **Environmental health,** including climate change, food and water safety, and vector borne disease prevention and control.
- **HIV, STI, and viral hepatitis** prevention.
- **Infectious disease** prevention, including vaccines and antimicrobial resistance.
- **Injury and violence** prevention, including gun violence.
- **Maternal and child health** promotion.
- **Reproductive health** and family planning services.
- **Substance use disorder** prevention and treatment.
- **Tobacco control** and prevention, including e-cigarettes.