

## Local Health Departments Impact Our Lives Every Day



Local health departments at the city and county level are on the front lines in ensuring the health of the public. The public may not always see the work they do, but communities are safer and healthier because of it.

### Emergency Preparedness

**(Federal Agencies: CDC/ASPR)**

Local health departments are on-call 24 hours a day, seven days a week to protect their communities quickly and efficiently from all types of public health emergencies. They develop emergency plans, train their workforce and conduct exercises to test plans, and use lessons learned from trainings and exercises to improve those plans. Local health departments secure life-saving medicines and resources including shelter supplies, vaccinations, and first-aid equipment. They know how to quickly respond and deploy these resources during public health emergencies as the result of preparedness planning, training, and exercises.

### Immunization

**(Federal Agencies: CDC/CMS)**

Local health departments vaccinate people in their communities, providing one of the most successful and cost-effective services to prevent disease and death. Most local health departments provide direct immunization services and promote the importance of immunizations through education and policy. Local health departments use immunization information registries to record and track vaccine administration, provide immunization outreach, and educate providers within their communities.

### Infectious Disease Prevention

**(Federal Agencies: CDC/HRSA)**

Despite the extraordinary successes generated by immunizations, pharmaceuticals, and evidence-based public health interventions, the spread of infectious diseases remains a critical issue. Sexually transmitted infections, vaccine-preventable diseases, and emerging threats like Ebola and Zika all demonstrate the need for strong infectious disease prevention and control programs. When a disease outbreak occurs in a community, local health departments conduct investigations and collect and analyze data to track and prevent the spread of infectious diseases. Local health departments rely on surveillance and monitoring to detect outbreaks to prevent more people from being infected.

### Chronic Disease Prevention

**(Federal Agency: CDC)**

Local health departments work with a wide range of community partners to create conditions and policies that help people make healthy choices, such as avoiding tobacco use and eating healthier foods. Local health department staff work to advance policy changes at the local level, such as bans on trans-fats in food served by restaurants, and to sponsor and host screenings to identify people with chronic diseases, such as diabetes and heart disease, and connect them with services and tools to help them manage their diseases. Proactive measures like these ensure there are safe spaces to exercise and play, and contribute to the prevention of chronic diseases and risk factors like obesity, diabetes, and heart disease.

## Environmental Health

(Federal Agency: CDC/EPA)

Local health departments create disease control and prevention plans targeted to reduce bacterial and viral diseases transmitted by mosquitoes, ticks, rodents, and other emerging vectors. Local health departments ensure communities have clean water and air and educate residents about air pollution. This is especially important for citizens with chronic diseases, as well as healthy adults who exercise or work outdoors, and people with limited economic resources without access to medical care. Local health departments investigate, plan for, respond to, and educate the community and key partners about water-, food-, and insect-borne diseases.

## Food Safety

(Federal Agencies: CDC/FDA)

Local health departments are an essential part of the process to ensure that food is safe to eat at home, at community events, in restaurants, and in schools. They work with state, local, and national partners to prevent, identify, and respond to outbreaks of food-borne illness. They inspect restaurants, grocery stores, daycare facilities, hospitals, schools, and some food manufacturing plants to ensure safe food handling practices and sanitary conditions. When necessary, a local health department will take action to ensure that a food establishment complies with sanitation standards.

## Injury and Violence Prevention

(Federal Agency: CDC/SAMHSA)

Local health departments have an important position in coordinating the broader public health system's efforts to address the causes of injury and violence. They implement and support key interventions to prevent prescription drug misuse and overdose, motor-vehicle related injuries, violence against children and youth, and falls among older adults. Local health departments develop and implement policies to prevent prescription drug misuse and overdose. Local health departments are key partners for states as they are responsible for ensuring the health

of communities and serve on the front lines of the opioid epidemic. Local health departments look to curb the epidemic by increased prescription drug monitoring and access to life-saving Naloxone or Naltrexone.

## Maternal and Child Health

(Federal Agency: HRSA/CDC)

Local health departments protect and promote the health, safety, and security of women, children, youth, and families. They act as safety-net providers and connect family members to support programs that provide parenting support; home visiting services; newborn screening; lead screening and assessment; supplemental nutrition for women, infants, and children; injury and violence prevention; and intimate partner violence screening as well as services such as HIV/STI testing and screening, immunizations, and oral health screening.

## Tobacco Control

(Federal Agency: CDC/FDA)

Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable death and disease in the United States. Local health departments institute policies to raise the minimum age of tobacco sales to minors, implement smoke-free multiunit housing, and restrict use of electronic cigarettes and other new products. Local health departments communicate with the public through anti-smoking advertising campaigns to decrease smoking and target high-risk groups. They provide or refer people for counseling and medications and educate health care providers about available local resources that support tobacco cessation.

### Key: Federal Agency Acronyms

ASPR – Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response

CDC – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

CMS – Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services

FDA – Food and Drug Administration

HRSA – Health Resources and Services Administration

SAMHSA – Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

### About NACCHO

The National Association of County and City Health Officials is the voice of more than 3,000 local health departments across the country. These city, county, metropolitan, district, and tribal departments work every day to ensure the safety of the water we drink, the food we eat, and the air we breathe.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

**Eli Briggs**

Senior Director, Government Affairs

202-507-4194

[ebriggs@naccho.org](mailto:ebriggs@naccho.org)

**NACCHO**

National Association of County & City Health Officials

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**Public Health**  
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1100 17th St, NW, 7th Floor Washington, DC 20036

202-783-5550

<http://www.naccho.org>

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