

NACCHO

National Association of County & City Health Officials

The National Connection for Local Public Health

October 16, 2018

Robert Redfield, MD
Director
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
1600 Clifton Road
Atlanta, GA 30329

Dear Dr. Redfield,

On behalf of the National Association of County and City Health Officials and nearly 3,000 local health departments, I am writing to highlight the need for federal opioid prevention resources to reach local communities, specifically through the nation's local health departments, to combat the opioid epidemic.

As you are aware, under the leadership of Secretary Alex Azar, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has made the opioid epidemic one of its top priorities. We appreciate your past comments about your commitment to stopping the opioid epidemic. Local health departments are key partners instrumental in slowing and stopping the opioid epidemic, through building community coalitions, providing surveillance data to community partners and conducting public outreach campaigns.

Congress recognized the critical role of local health departments in successfully addressing the opioid epidemic by including language in the joint explanatory statement to the FY2019 Labor, HHS, Education Appropriations bill that calls on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to "continue to use the provided funds to advance the understanding of the opioid overdose epidemic and scale up prevention activities across all 50 states, Washington, D.C., territories, and Tribes, **as well as extend eligibility to local health departments.**"

As NACCHO has highlighted previously, local health departments did not receive direct funding from CDC this year for opioid prevention, even though the means through which such funds were distributed included several "pre-approved" big city health departments that have been directly funded for other public health emergencies. NACCHO calls on the CDC to ensure that the funding in FY2019 is allocated to local health departments as Congress intended, in order to prevent and respond to opioid misuse in communities across the country.

NACCHO looks forward to continuing to work with you and staff throughout CDC to address the life-threatening impact of the opioid epidemic. Please contact Eli Briggs, NACCHO Senior Director of Government Affairs, at ebriggs@naccho.org should you have any questions or wish to discuss further.

Sincerely,



Lori Tremmel Freeman, MBA
Chief Executive Officer

