



Senate Healthcare Bill Would Eviscerate Public Health and Healthcare Access

Statement by Laura Hanen, MPP, Interim Executive Director and Chief of Government Affairs of NACCHO

WASHINGTON, DC, USA, June 22, 2017 /EINPresswire.com/ -- "As the voice of nearly 3,000 local health departments across the United States, the National Association of County and City Health Officials ([NACCHO](#)) strongly disavows the Senate's 'Better Care Reconciliation Act of 2017' bill, which eliminates the funding that provides essential resources to governmental public health at the federal, state and local levels. In addition, rural communities will be hit particularly hard by the legislation's proposed Medicaid cuts."

The "Better Care Reconciliation Act of 2017" eliminates funding for the Prevention and Public Health Fund (PPHF) in FY2018, eroding 12% of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) funding. Among the CDC programs at risk are the 317 Immunization Program, Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity Grants, Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program, Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention, and Diabetes Prevention, among others, which support local health department activities to keep the public healthy and safe.

In FY2020, the "Better Care Reconciliation Act of 2017" begins phasing out the Medicaid expansion established by 32 states after the passage of the Affordable Care Act, which has provided access to primary and emergency care to millions of Americans. The bill also caps federal Medicaid funding, which will ultimately result in shifting responsibility to the states and counties — leaving governors, state legislatures, and local governments facing tight budgets with limited choices, other than reducing coverage for millions of seniors, low-income families, people with disabilities, and children. While the bill addresses the opioid epidemic by providing additional funding, at the same time, limitations on Medicaid access would potentially deny substance abuse treatment for 1.3 million people who need it.

"America's heartland will suffer if this rushed, short-sighted legislation becomes law. Many individuals living in rural areas rely on Medicaid to stay healthy and maintain their quality of life. They will lose their coverage. These families already face challenges in accessing care, because healthcare providers and hospitals are farther away. The higher poverty rates in rural communities make a problematic situation even more difficult and can lead to poor health outcomes. In addition, some rural hospitals may close without enough insured patients, hurting the entire community.

"Moreover, the public's health will suffer with the passage of this legislation. The burden will fall on our already overstretched local health departments to protect the public's health. Local health departments need adequate funding to carry out their mandate to protect the communities they serve and help us all maintain a good quality of life."

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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.

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