



NACCHO Statement on the First Baptist Church Massacre; Gun Violence Is a Public Health Epidemic

By Laura Hanen, MPP, Interim Executive Director and Chief of Government Affairs

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, November 6, 2017 /EINPresswire.com/ -- “The [National Association of County and City Health Officials](#) (NACCHO), representing nearly 3,000 local health departments across the country, is grieved by the horrific events that unfolded at the First Baptist Church in Sutherland Springs, TX. Gun violence – a crisis in this country with profound public health impacts – has become an epidemic in America and mass shootings now occur on a regular basis.

“Yesterday’s massacre in Texas, where at least 26 people, young and old, were killed and at least 20 more were injured, follows last month’s rampage in Las Vegas that left 59 dead and 546 injured. In addition to thoughts and prayers for the victims, it is far past time for action to prevent such heartbreak. In the absence of federal leadership, local officials, including public health leaders, are taking critical steps to address this crisis, including community-based prevention programs and public outreach and education aimed at reducing violence.

“At the federal and/or state level, where applicable, NACCHO supports common-sense approaches to stem the tide of violence, including conducting background checks on all gun purchases, preventing individuals most at risk of violence from purchasing guns, banning assault weapons and large ammunition magazines, and engaging in research about how to effectively address violence. Moreover, health officials, government leaders, law enforcement, faith communities, and concerned citizens, including lawful gun owners, must come together to address the social and cultural issues that cause individuals to, far too often, resort to violence. Indeed, we need a public health approach to the violence epidemic.

“Additionally, we urge Congress to allow the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to conduct research on gun violence prevention, including suicide prevention.

“While none of these steps will stop all gun violence or prevent all mass shootings, they will be a significant step in turning the tide. NACCHO, its members, and the public health community offer support and sympathy for the families and friends of the victims of First Baptist Church massacre. This is a senseless and preventable loss that no family should ever have to bear.”

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About NACCHO

The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) represents the nation's nearly 3,000 local 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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