



NACCHO's Applauds Surgeon General's Naloxone Recommendations

Naloxone Is a Component in Local Health Departments' Efforts to Reduce Opioid Overdose and Death

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, April 5, 2018 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The [National Association of County and City Health Officials](#) (NACCHO), representing the nation's nearly 3,000 local governmental health departments, supports Surgeon General Jerome M. Adams' recommendation urging more Americans to carry the opioid overdose-reversing drug naloxone.

The medication, naloxone, is already carried by many first responders, including EMTs and police officers. The Surgeon General is now recommending that more individuals, including family, friends, and those who are personally at risk for an opioid overdose, also keep the drug on hand.

"We are pleased that the Surgeon General is raising awareness of this life-saving tool," said Laura Hanen, MPP, NACCHO's Interim Executive Director and Chief of Government Affairs. "Dr. Adams is helping destigmatize those who are struggling with opioid addiction by acknowledging the importance of keeping people alive. We strongly support increasing the public's access to and use of naloxone. However, naloxone is only one piece of public health's multifaceted approach. It is also critical that we support programs that meet people where they are to get them the help they need. Addiction prevention is also key. We must maintain a strong focus on keeping people from becoming addicted in the first place."

NACCHO member Michael E. Kilkenny, MD, MS, is the Physician Director of the Cabell-Huntington Health Department in Huntington, WV, a community experiencing high overdose rates. Dr. Kilkenny recently testified before Congress, describing the success of his health department's naloxone program. Said Dr. Kilkenny, "We have supplied naloxone and training on its administration to all law enforcement agencies operating in the county. In addition, we operate a community naloxone distribution program which, along with Cabell County Emergency Medical Services, reversed more than 2,500 overdoses last year."

Some local health departments, including Cabell-Huntington, offer syringe service programs as a harm reduction measure. Hanen said it is important to note the opioid epidemic is also driving a rise in opioid-related infectious diseases. "Opioid addiction's link to a rise in hepatitis B and C and HIV/AIDS infections illustrates the critical necessity of increasing the availability of syringe service programs to protect our communities."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will receive additional funding for FY2018, which Hanen hopes will result in much-needed resources at the local level. "In addition to receiving funds allowing them to provide naloxone to their communities, local health departments also need support to collect and analyze data allowing them to find and target areas where people are dying from opioid overdoses, and to conduct public outreach and education with at-risk populations. Local health department staffs are the boots on the ground in this epidemic and they will require multiple tools to protect their communities. We applaud the Surgeon General's actions, and we look forward to

collaborating with him as federal, state, and local public health agencies work with communities to find solutions to this deadly epidemic.”

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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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